



March 14, 1954

THE MATHENYS: LIVES AND LEGACIES OF CARING

The History of The
Matheny Medical and
Educational Center

Groundbreaking in
every sense of the word.



“Some people dream of the future but are unable to shape reality. A few, like Walter and Marguerite Matheny, actually turn their dream into a reality and leave a legacy that forever changes the landscape of life.”

— Steven Proctor, former president of the Matheny Medical and Educational Center



In 1966, 20 years after the school's founding, Walter Matheny said:

“Time and again I hear parents ask the same question I asked 25 years ago—‘Why me?’

“I had no answer then, but I believe I have one now. If our son Chuck had not been born with cerebral palsy, Marguerite and I never would have gone into this work, the school never would have been built, and hundreds of children never would have been helped by the wonderful staff we have been able to assemble.”

Chuck Matheny at about age 9.

HIBBING, MINNESOTA

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

HIBBING, MINNESOTA

Where Marguerite and Walter met.

Located about 75 miles northwest of Duluth, the City of Hibbing was built on mining the rich ore of the Mesabi Iron Range.

The house at 2809 Third Avenue in Hibbing, where Mary Marguerite Hughes lived in 1930, where she graduated from high school and enrolled in Hibbing Junior College.



Hibbing High School / Junior College

Completed in 1922, the high school building also housed Hibbing Junior College. In 1930, both Mary Marguerite Hughes and Walter Matheny enrolled in the college. Walter had moved to Hibbing from Minneapolis, where he had grown up.

Other notable graduates of the high school included Robert Allen Zimmerman — better known today as the musician Bob Dylan.

1928 Graduates of Edison High School
Minneapolis, MN

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Walter Duane Matheny was one of four children—two boys and two girls—of William and Etta Matheny of Minneapolis.

William owned a meat market, Central Provision Co., where Walter worked for a time after graduating from Edison High School in 1928. William Matheny either would not or could not support and fund Walter's desire to attend the University of Minnesota, so after working at various jobs for two years after high school, Walter enrolled in 1930 at Hibbing Junior College, which had free tuition.

Elder sister Yvonne

Walter



Edison High School

LAWRENCE LEVESQUE
Only the brave deserve the fair.
Glee Club, 1, 2, 3; Chimes of Normandy; Yokohama Maid; H. M. S. Pinafore; We Club; Tumbling Team, 1; Rooters' Club, 4.

THOMAS LYNCH
"Jollity has added one more victim to his list."
Hi-Y, 2; We Club; Rooters' Club, 4; Orchestra, 1, 2.

ELSE LINDBERG
Pure gold, none finer.
G. A. A., 1, 2, 3; Commercial Club, 3; Carl Linnaeus, 2, 3, 4; Secretary, 4; Blue Triangle, 4; Bank Cashier, 2, 3, 4; Senior Girls' Club; Big Sisters' Club; Gynnite 2; Library Asst., 4.

PEARL Mc GUFFIE
Well Honey, there is nothing to say about you except—We are glad to have met you.
Blue Triangle, 1, 2, 3, 4; G. A. A., 1; Dramatic Club, 4; Class Play Class, 4; Big Sister, 4; Senior Girls' Club, 4; Gleam, 3; Opera "Carrie Comes to College," 4; Princess Chrysanthemum; Vaudeville, 4.

EVELYN LINDHOLM
What is better than a happy heart?
Blue Triangle, 2, 4; Commercial Club, 3; Big Sisters' Club; Senior Girls' Club.

ELSIE MASICA
"Weep no more woeful shepherd, weep no more, for Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead."
Commercial Club, 3, 4; Big Sister Club, 4; Senior Girls' Club, 4; Gynnite, 2.

LE ROY LINDQUIST
I am not afraid of work, I can go to sleep right beside it.
Silver Triangle, 1; Blue Triangle, 2, 3, 4; G. A. A., 2, 3, 4; Commercial Club; Girls' Volley Ball Team, 3; Yokohama Maid, 2; Vaudeville, 3; Senior Girls' Club.

WALTEr MATHENY
Measure his greatness in colars and he'll be worth a million.
We Club; Glee Club, 2, 3; Class Play; Basketball, 3; Football, 3, 4.

ADELLE LINGREN
"Don't wake me up, let me dream."
Big Sisters' Club, 4; Blue Triangle, 4; Carl Linnaeus, 2, 3, 4; Girls' Rooter Club.

HELEN LUCAS
A regular little Dickens!
Silver Triangle, 1, 2; Blue Triangle, 3, 4; Commercial Club, 3; G. A. A., 1, 2, 3, 4; Letter, 2; Cup, 3; Tumbling Team, 2, 3; Girls' Volley Ball Team, 1, 2, 3; Vice President Class, 3; Gynnite, 2, 3; Vaudeville, 2, 3, 4; Senior Girls' Club, 4; Honor Roll, 1, 2, 3, 4; Dramatic Club, 4.

EVELYN MATTSON
A girl endowed with more than her share of brains.
Entered From Dassel in second year. Big Sister Club, 4; Senior Girls' Rooter Club, 4; Blue Triangle, 3; Lunch Room Committee, 4.

Duluth News-Tribune
June 9, 1933

STUDENTS GET HONOR AWARDS AT RANGE J. C.

Walter Matheny, Athlete,
Named Outstanding Mem-
ber of His Class.

HIBBING, June 8.—(Special.)—Achievements in scholarship, forensics and athletics during the last year at Hibbing Junior college, were recognized yesterday when awards were presented at class day exercises.

Walter Matheny, track captain, winner of six letters in sports and editor of the "Chronicle," student newspaper, received the Engineers award as the outstanding student of his class, while Lillian Hanson

A football injury at Hibbing caused Walter to be hospitalized and lose the better part of his first year of college, thereby delaying his graduation until 1933.



Serendipitously, a friend of Walter's who happened to know Mary Marguerite Hughes took her with him to visit Walter in the hospital. Evidently, there was an attraction.

In part due to the effects of the Great Depression, Walter and Marguerite had a very modest, at-home marriage in Hibbing on June 4, 1936.

After graduating from junior college in 1932, Marguerite went to the University of Minnesota, graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1934. She returned to Hibbing to teach biology to seventh and eighth graders.

While Walter was at Hibbing, he won a scholarship that covered tuition for his last two years of college at the University of Arizona. He graduated in 1935 with a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education—a major that would later come in quite handy!

Duluth News-Tribune
February 2, 1936

Exercises Right Defects of Iron Range Students

HIBBING, Feb. 1.—(Special)—Correction of physical defects by means of exercise is being accomplished in an unusual class which has for several months been a part of instruction offered in Hibbing schools.

Activities of the new department, which was initiated here last fall, are at present confined to the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, with most attention being devoted to the most urgent cases. Outlined tentatively for next year, however, is expansion and centralization of the course, with establishment of a central clinic in Hibbing high school.

Study has revealed that not only are obvious disorders, such as displacement and cramping of internal organs by poor posture, but also functional heart trouble, constipation, and the aftermath of infantile paralysis are correctible by proper manipulation and exercise.

Examinations conducted here by Walter Matheny, supervisor of the program, have disclosed that about one third of the students enrolled in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades suffer from disorders which may be cured in this manner. Immediate attention is being given the 13 per cent found to require treatment without delay.

After graduating from the University of Arizona, Walter returned to Hibbing and, like Marguerite, taught in the public school system — he taught phys. ed. and coached, she taught biology.

Walter started a program for the “correction of physical defects by means of exercise.”

Through this program, Walter was able to develop theories and philosophies in a field in which very little research had been done.

After speaking to the Chamber of Commerce about the remedial aspects of physical training, the word spread and soon parents were coming to him for help with their handicapped children. Little did he know then how significant that work would become later following the birth of Chuck.

After Marguerite and Walter’s June 1936 marriage, they “honeymooned” by driving to Iowa City so Walter could work on his Masters Degree.

Unfortunately for Marguerite, in those days during the Great Depression married women were not allowed to teach, so she had to quit her full-time job. To make ends meet, Walter dusted off his earlier training in his father’s meat market and, in his off hours, did butchering work for the local A & P store.

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

THE ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED
IN IT BY LAW AND ON RECOMMENDATION OF THE UNIVERSITY FACULTY
DOES HEREBY CONFER ON

WALTER D. MATHENY

THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF LAWS

WITH ALL THE RIGHTS, PRIVILEGES AND HONORS THEREUNTO APPERTAINING
GIVEN AT TUCSON, THIS TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF MAY, 1971

Jack Williams
GOVERNOR OF ARIZONA

Norman J. Sharkey
PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



Richard A. Harvill
PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

David L. Windsor
SECRETARY OF THE FACULTY

In 1971, 36 years after Walter received his undergraduate degree from the University of Arizona, the school awarded him an honorary degree.

Daughter Mary Ann, then an undergraduate at the school, was proud to be in attendance.

“You have devoted your life to the welfare of children. Pioneering achievements by you and your wife, Marguerite, have inspired great progress in the education of the handicapped and have produced world-wide benefits for cerebral-palsied children.

“In recognition of your contributions as educator and humanitarian, the University of Arizona confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Laws.”

—May 29, 1971

Track Meet Brings Gopher Reunions



—Tribune Staff Photographer.

The state high school track meet at Memorial stadium Saturday brought several reunions for Gopher athletes, past and present. In these were the Matheny brothers, shown in the top picture.

Walter Matheny, left, coach of the Hibbing track team, enlisted one strong rooter in his brother Bill, right, current Gopher halfback star. Below, Clarence Munn, the former Gopher all-American player, is shown at the right talking things over with a 1931 teammate, Tuck Teeter, who now coaches the West high school football team. Munn next fall will assist Ossie Solem as Syracuse university football coach. Until accepting this position this spring he was football coach at Albright college.

Athlete Brothers Reunite

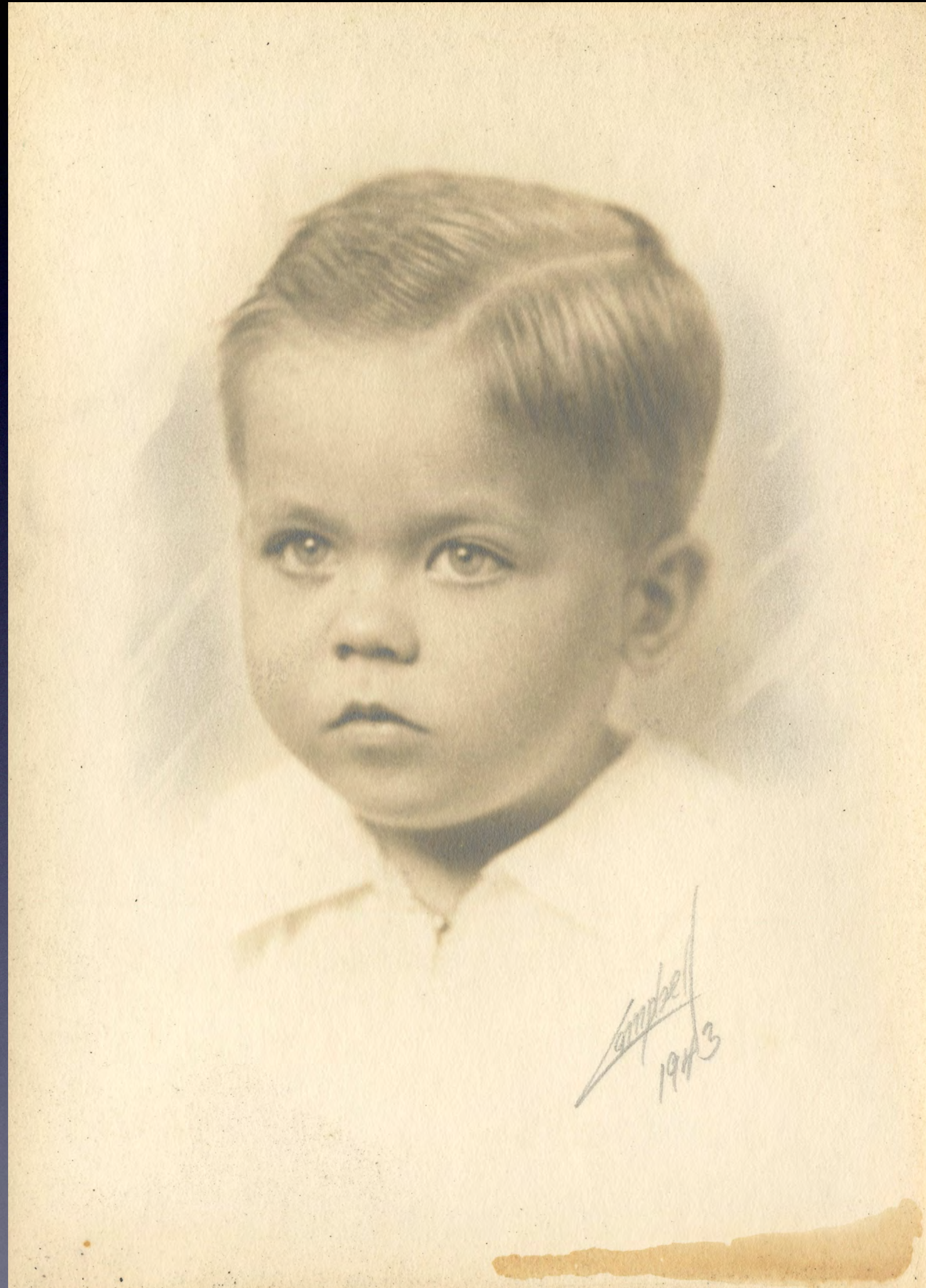
In June 1937, as coach of the Hibbing High School track team and a former track and football star himself, Walter attended the Minnesota state high school track meet.

The *Minneapolis Star Tribune* reported that he “enlisted one strong rooter” in his younger brother, Bill, who was then the star halfback on the University of Minnesota “Gophers” football team.

Minneapolis Star Tribune
June 6, 1937

MARCH 30, 1941 — FOR THE MATHENYS
LIFE FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED

Charles Hughes Matheny



On March 30, 1941, Charles Hughes Matheny—“Chuck”—was born and the Mathenys’ lives were forever changed.

Immediately, the attending physicians and the Mathenys knew something was wrong, but it was not until some time later that Chuck’s condition was diagnosed as cerebral palsy, a neuromuscular disease.

Walter later said, “Before he was an hour old we had decided that if his handicap was a physical one, we would devote our lives to helping him and other children like him.”

In a 1949 article about the Mathenys, journalist Mildred Grayovski wrote of Chuck’s birth:

“Until that time, the work of this dedicated couple was absorbing, interesting, heart-warming. With the birth of their son, it became a personal thing, a thing of the heart, the real spark, push, challenge. Their lives, ambitions, hopes, efforts, strength, worldly possessions belonged to them no longer. Their entire existences were rededicated.”



Loving parents with their baby boy.

The World War II Years

3-20-46 Relief from Act. Duty.

SERIAL NUMBER 2899	1. NAME (Print) WALTER DUANE MATHENY <small>(First) (Middle) (Last)</small>	ORDER NUMBER 1840	
2. ADDRESS (Print) 1006 1/2 - E. HOWARD - HIBBING - ST. LOUIS - MINN. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>			
3. TELEPHONE 1601 <small>(Exchange) (Number)</small>	4. AGE IN YEARS 29 DATE OF BIRTH MARCH - 14 - 1911 <small>(Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)</small>	5. PLACE OF BIRTH MINNEAPOLIS MINN. <small>(Town or county) (State or country)</small>	6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U.S.A.
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS MRS. MARGUERITE - M. MATHENY <small>(Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)</small>		8. RELATIONSHIP OF THAT PERSON WIFE	
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 1006 1/2 - E. HOWARD - HIBBING - ST. LOUIS - MINN. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>			
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME IND. SCHOOL DIST. # 27			
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS HIBBING - ST. LOUIS - MINN. <small>(Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)</small>			

I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.

REGISTRATION CARD
D. S. S. Form 1
16-17105
(over)

W. A. Matheny
(Registrant's signature)



Walter's World War II Draft

In 1941, not long before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Walter was one of six civilian consultants appointed to the Army Air Corps to set up and run physical training programs.

The job involved a number of moves for the family—first to Montgomery, Alabama; then to the Basic Training Flying School in Americus, Georgia; then to Miami, Florida, where, he said, they “made officers and gentlemen of us in six weeks.”





Chuck's First Parallel Bars

Valdosta, Ga. 1943

In 1943, the Mathenys were transferred to the Advanced Flying Training School in Valdosta, Georgia, where Walter was in charge of physical training for both British and American soldiers.

From Georgia, Walter was transferred to Army Special Forces to rehabilitate injured service men.

First assigned to the hospital program at Fort Devon, in Massachusetts, he was later transferred to a large convalescent military hospital on Cape Cod.

An article in a Boston newspaper about Walter's rehabilitation work for the military prompted two people, one an adult paraplegic and one a young girl with cerebral palsy, to move to Cape Cod to receive hands-on physical rehabilitation.

All of this was impetus for the Mathenys to establish their own school.

Chuck's First Rehabilitation Treatment

When Chuck was a baby, not a lot was known about cerebral palsy or how to deal with it. In 1932 an orthopedic surgeon at Yale, Dr. Winthrop Phelps—who would later prove to be so supportive of the Mathenys' efforts to start their own school—published an article about CP in a medical journal.

One of Phelps' significant contributions was to emphasize the distinction between those patients with cognitive challenges, or mental retardation, from patients with cerebral palsy, who had motor control issues but not intellectual challenges.

In 1943, when Chuck was age two and the family was stationed in Valdosta, the Mathenys heard about a school in Florida that might be of help. Marguerite and Chuck visited the school, and Chuck was accepted for treatment.

Within weeks of his enrollment, the school was relocated to Long Island, and Marguerite was asked to join the staff as a teacher by day and nurse's aide by night. As a result, she soon learned many of the skills that would serve her so well in the future.




Chuck in Valdosta, Georgia, 1943

THE MILTON H. BERRY FOUNDATION

THE UNPLANNED FINAL IMPETUS
TO ESTABLISH THE MATHENY SCHOOL

Los Angeles Times
December 5, 1939



Death Calls Milton Berry

Man Who Restored
Thousands of Paralysis
Victims Succumbs

BY ED AINSWORTH

Death came early yesterday to Dr. Milton H. Berry 63, the man who had restored to useful lives more crippled children than any other infantile paralysis specialist in America.

His last moment came in the family home at 2344 N. Vermont Ave., following a heart attack last Tuesday night.

Rosary services were conducted last night at the L. G. Scovern chapel in Glendale and a second service will be at 8 p.m. today.

LABORS END — Dr. Milton H. Berry taken by death.

PIONEER IN FIELD

For 40 years Dr. Berry had been the pioneer in the science of infantile paralysis correction through exercise. Since 1899 when he had embarked upon his humanitarian career, he had restored more than 2000 victims of the disease, many of whom had never been out of wheel chairs or on their feet in their lives. Now his two sons and his

In March 1946 Walter was released from active duty and given an honorable discharge from the Army Air Force.

Evidently, his rehabilitation work for the Army had been noted and he was recruited by the Milton H. Berry Foundation for Paralysis Correction, headquartered in California.

Walter, Marguerite, and Chuck moved to the Berry Foundation's headquarters where Walter was placed in charge of staff training and Marguerite worked as a speech therapist.

The foundation had been founded in 1899 by Dr. Berry to deal with symptoms of infantile paralysis, or polio. Following Dr. Berry's death, in 1939, his son and namesake took over the foundation and expanded the range of treatments and the number of treatment facilities to fifteen.

In July 1946 the Berry Foundation opened its first East Coast facility, in Far Hills, with Walter Matheny placed in charge.

OPEN NEW SCHOOL IN FAR HILLS

Treatment of Spastics and Sufferers
from Paralysis in Approved Tech-
niques Will Be Followed.

The first East Coast school of the Milton **Berry Foundation** for spastic and paralysis correction, said to be the world's largest and oldest organization of the kind, will open in Far Hills, Monday, July first.

Located in the former Somerset Hills School building on State Highway 32, the Far Hills school has been designated eastern divisional headquarters by the 47-year-old foundation. The area from Maine to the Carolinas on line with Pittsburgh, Pa., will be served. The local school, most recently established, brings the total number of schools maintained in the United States by the foundation to fifteen.

The **Berry Foundation** is a non-profit organization dedicated to teaching persons, particularly children, who are handicapped or paralyzed as a result of physical injuries how to walk, talk, coordinate use of hands and to become physically independent insofar as is possible according to the powers within each student.

Bernardsville News
June 27, 1946

The foundation has taken a three-year lease on the Far Hills school building with option to buy. Renovations include replacing steps with ramps and removing lavatory facilities from the upper floors to the first floor.

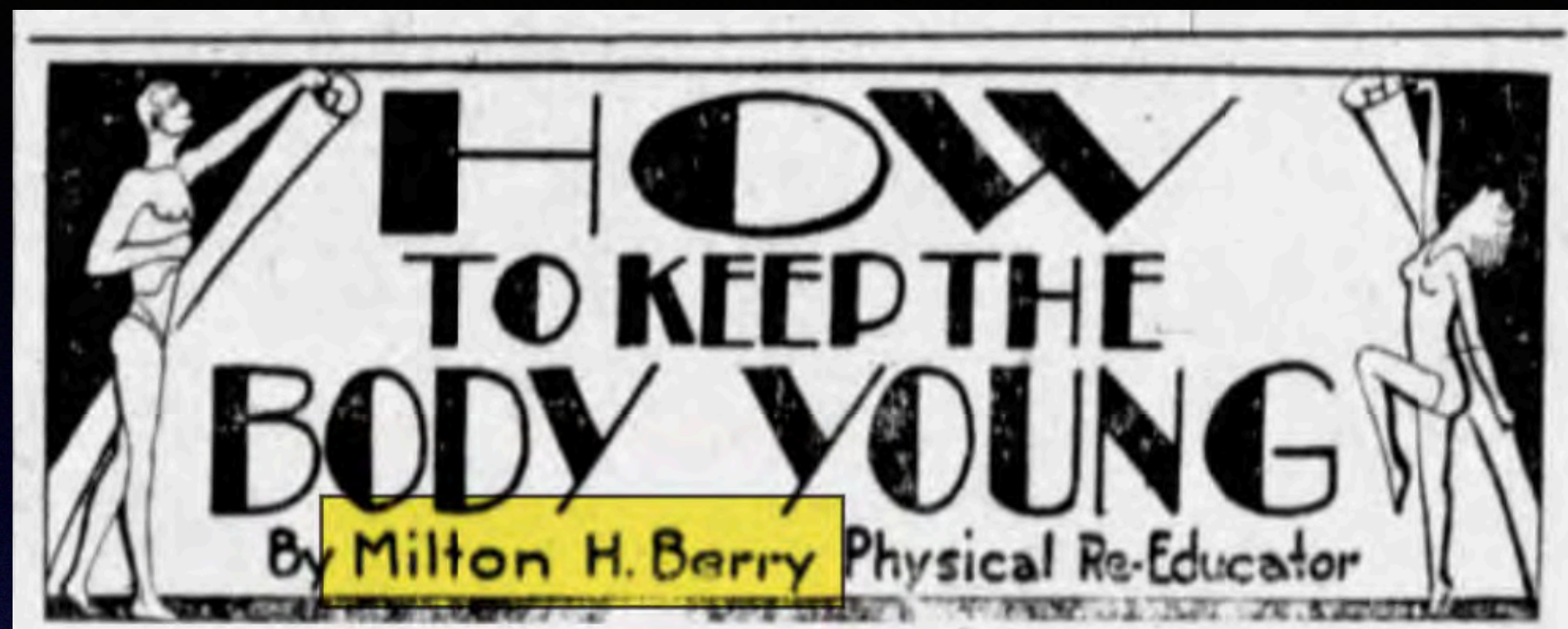
General supervision of the Far Hills school is under the national technical directors, Bert E. Harris, Pk. D., and O. Robert Warburton, Pk. D. The faculty, headed by Walter Matheny, B. S., will be composed of trained supervisors and technicians. Mr. Matheny was recently discharged a commissioned officer from the Army Air Forces. In service, he did work similar to his duties at the school.

With the opening of the Far Hills school, the foundation states it has completed the major part of its American expansion program. Founded in 1899 by the late Dr. Milton H. Berry, Sr. at Encino, it continued as a private school until 1939. After the death of Dr. Berry, his son, Milton H. Berry, Jr. expanded nationally the program. In the future, international expansion is planned.

As at other schools, a three-month course will be given at Far Hills. Students are expected from all walks of life and age groups. Those affected by paralysis from back injuries, polio as well as spastics, will be enrolled. In most cases, the mother or guardian will be enrolled with the student. Each

According to this 1946 article in the *Bernardsville News*, the Berry Foundation's rehabilitation work had evolved beyond treatment for just polio to include "those affected by paralysis from back injuries, polio, as well as spastics" — by which they meant cerebral palsy.

Unfortunately, the program was limited to a 3-month treatment.



ABOVE:

Logo for a weekly column by Dr. Berry that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, beginning in 1930.

FAR RIGHT:

June 13, 1930, article in the *Van Nuys News* about Delta Phi Lambda, a sorority established by Dr. Berry “for women afflicted with paralysis.”

After joining the Berry Foundation in California, Walter soon learned that when a child was enrolled at a Berry school, the mother was also enrolled. Under the guise of training it became evident that the mother really did the lion’s share of the rehabilitative work, despite paying substantial fees. Walter also found the Berry staff to be poorly trained.

Walter nevertheless accepted the offer to manage the Foundation’s first East Coast school, in Far Hills, because he felt he could set and enforce higher standards of training and treatment.

However, by late 1946, after only three months working for the Berry school in Far Hills, Walter had become even more disillusioned, feeling that the school was being run not for the benefit of the children but for the financial benefit of the Berry Foundation.

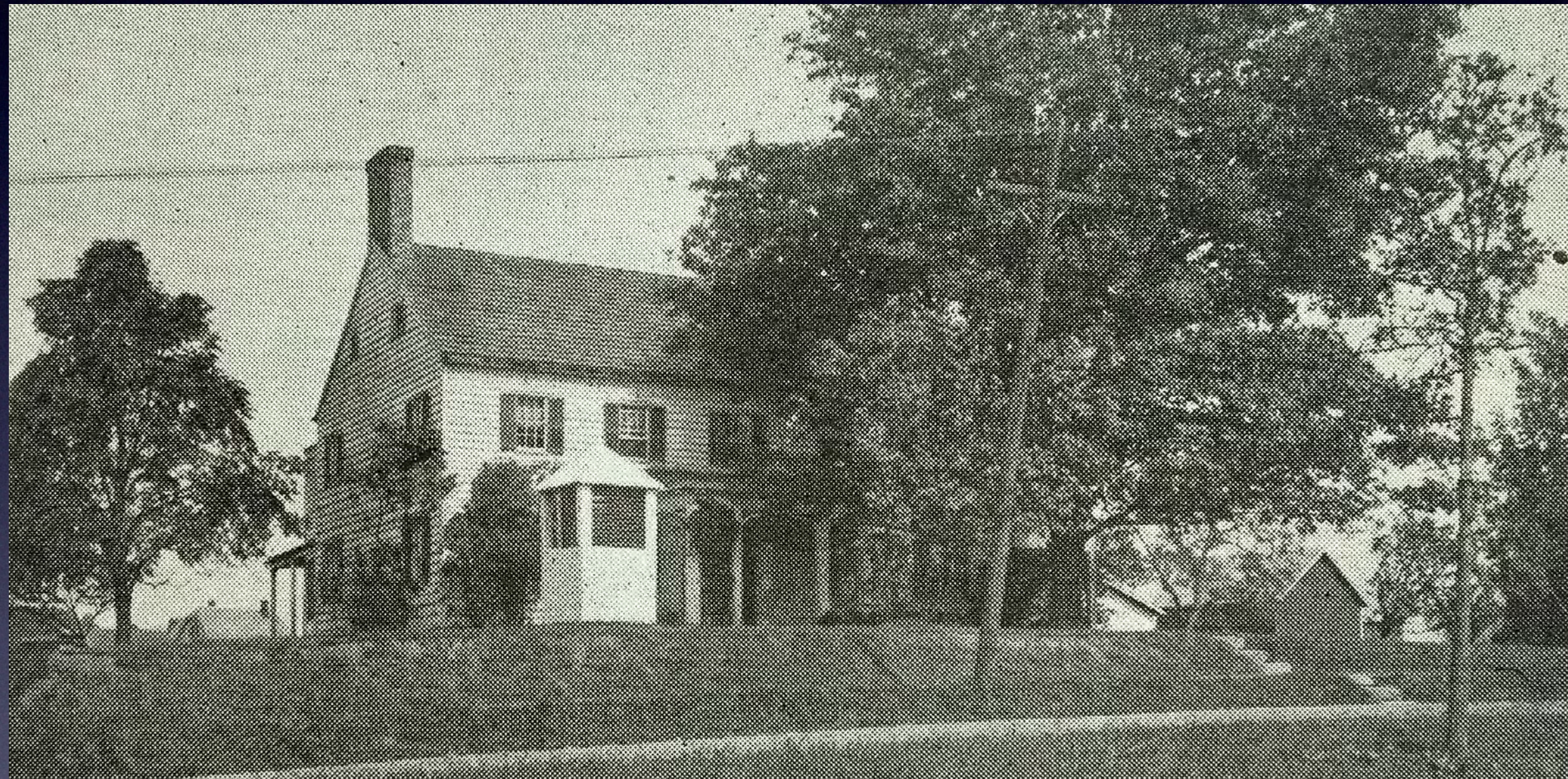
Walter and Marguerite realized they had to establish and run their own school.



But first a short digression into local history!

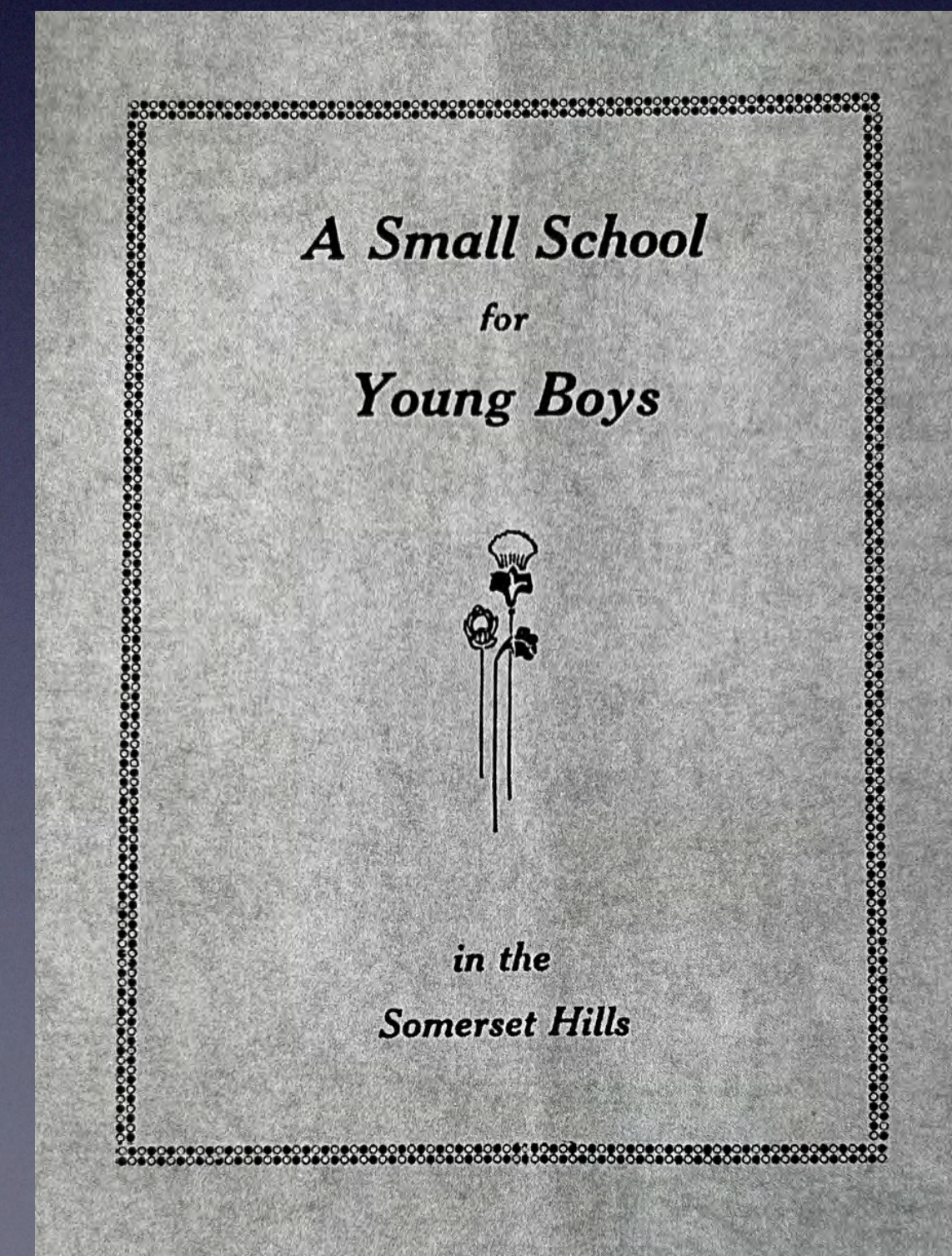
The Far Hills building that housed the Berry School
—and later the Matheny School—had a long
history as a school.

The building that came to house the Berry school, and later the Matheny school, started out as the Demun—later changed to Dumont—family homestead. It was likely built in the late 18th century. From 1808 to 1819 it served as the parsonage of Rev. Charles Hardenbergh, pastor of the Bedminster Dutch Reformed Church and founder of the Bedminster Academy, an early elementary and preparatory school.



In 1915 the building housed the Somerset Hills School, “a modern and progressive boarding and day school for young boys and girls” founded by Evelyn Baker Schley Behr, daughter of financier Grant B. Schley, the often-termed “founder” of Far Hills. Sadly, Evelyn died 1919 in the influenza pandemic and perhaps her school closed as a result.

From 1924 until the start of World War II, the building housed the Somerset Hills Preparatory School—generally known as The Fair School, named for its founder and headmaster, Rev. James H.S. Fair. The Fair School was remembered by Charles Scribner as being “frighteningly Dickensian,” but without leaving “any permanent educational damage.” Rev. Fair had previously been vicar of the Chapel of St. John-on-the-Mountain in Bernardsville and headmaster of St. Bernards Farm School in Gladstone and, briefly, of the Morristown School. Rev. Fair made additions to the Far Hills building in 1928 and 1930.



Bernardsville News
July 2, 1942

**NAVAL AVIATION CADETS TO
TRAIN AT FAR HILLS SCHOOL**

Dr. Frank D. Carvin, Coordinator of Civil Pilot Training, Newark College of Engineering, has announced the granting of a contract to train 30 Naval Aviation Cadets through the Civil Pilot Training Program. These 30 cadets include 20 men taking the elementary phase and 10 men taking the secondary training. The program started last Monday morning, June 29, and will run for a period of eight weeks. At the conclusion of the eight-week period a second program will start.

These Aviation Cadets will be quartered at the Somerset Hills School in Far Hills. The men will devote full time to the program. Ground school classes will be given in the morning and flight instruction in the afternoon. Flight instruction will be given at the Somerset Hills Airport in Basking Ridge.

In 1942 the building housed the Naval Aviation Cadets training center, with ground school training in the morning and flight instruction in the afternoon at the Somerset Hills Airport in Basking Ridge.

For one year, from 1944 to 1945, the Far Hills Country Day School occupied the building, before returning to the former William Page estate, the school's present location.

In July 1946, the Berry School moved in and remained until 1949.

As Far Hills Country Day



Berry Foundation School Closes

Far Hills—The Milton H. **Berry Foundation** School in Main St. was closed yesterday. Fifteen day students have been transferred to the foundation's school in Cincinnati.

Mrs. George Williamson, secretary, said that the school, a center for correction of spastic, polio and paraplegic handicaps, found its quarters "inadequate."

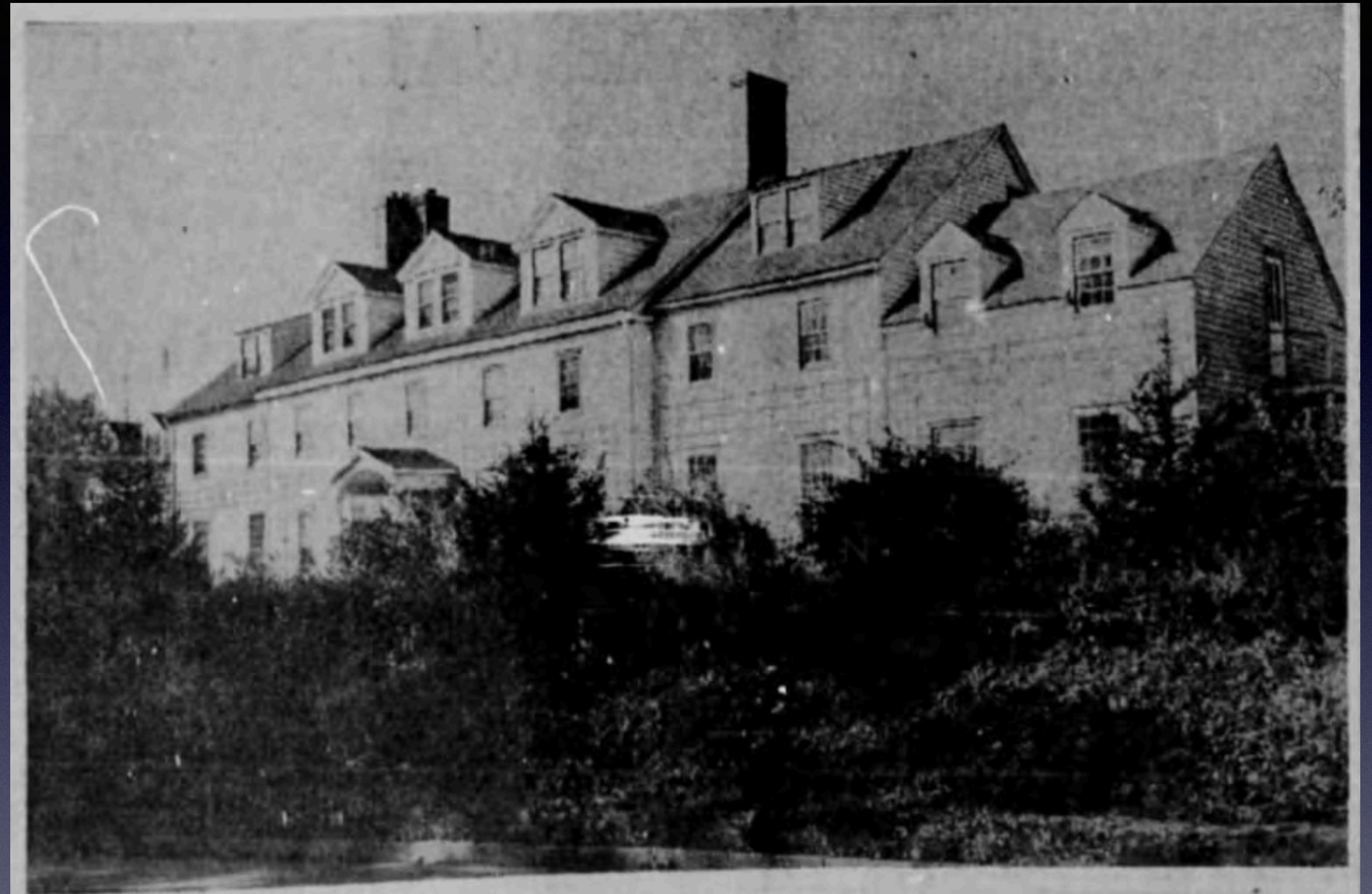
She said that the foundation will seek a new location in New Jersey and will maintain an office in the meantime at 33 Vroom St., Spring Lake. The school here was set up three years ago in a building formerly operated by the Rev. James F. S. Fair as a preparatory school.

Explaining that its facilities in Far Hills were "inadequate," the Berry Foundation closed its Far Hills school in 1949.

Shortly thereafter, the newly named Walter D. Matheny School for Paralysis Correction moved in, having relocated from its original Burnt Mills site.

In 1957, after 40+ years functioning as a variety of types of schools, the Far Hills building was converted to a combination of retail shops and professional offices.

How many here today remember the penny candy stand in the clothing store?



THE FORMER Walter D. Matheny School, located on Route 202 at the **Far Hills Center** which is being converted for use as a combination shopping center and professional building. The building, which was once known as "The Fair Mansion" contains 65 rooms and is owned by William Basset of Pottersville. Some units are already rented by the agent, Edward J. Egan of Liberty Corner. The Egan office will be located there as well as law offices, a public stenographer, etc. It is expected that there will be a drug store, a cleaning establishment and a food store. The Scott Shop, now located at the Center, will also occupy space.

The building today.



THE FIRST MATHENY SCHOOL
BURNT MILLS

“The Burnt Mills School & Summer Camp for Paralysis Correction”

The First Matheny School—December 1946 to November 1949



The Mathenys signed a 3-year lease of Hatfield House, a former boarding house on Burnt Mills Road west of Pluckemin.



Site of the Burnt Mills School for Paralysis Correction

On the east side of the North Branch of the Raritan River north of the confluence with the Lamington River.

Parts of the concrete foundation of the original school building are extant, as well as two buildings located behind the original school building.

Across the road was the site of the Burnt Mills Polo Club.



In late 1946, the Mathenys placed a small ad for the Burnt Mills School in *Good Housekeeping* magazine.

Opening staff: 3

Opening enrollment: 3 children
by January 1947 — 4 children
by June 1947 — 30 children

Original capital: \$3,000 from a
G.I. loan.

Today, the Matheny Medical and Educational Center has about 625 full and part-time employees.





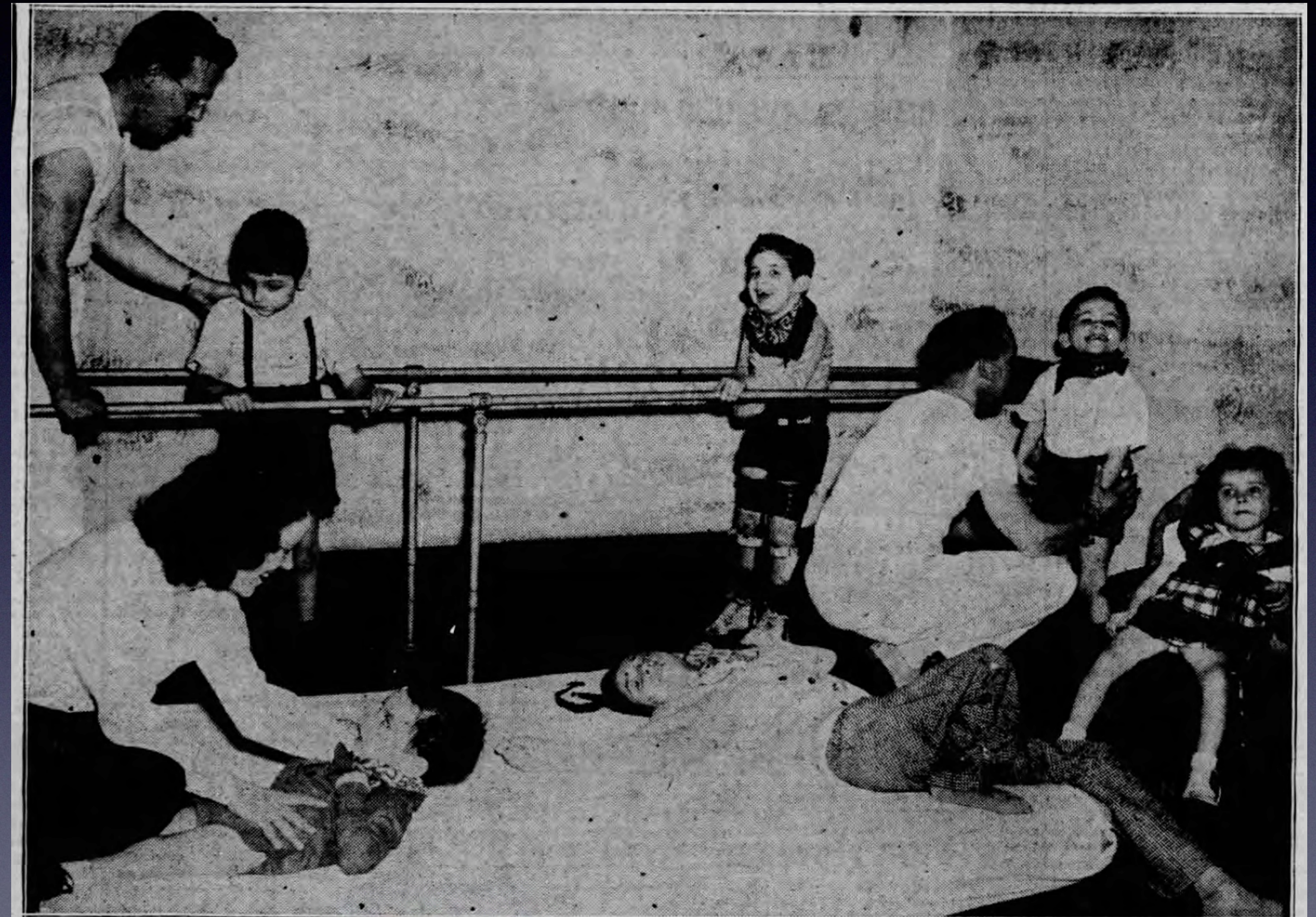
Over the last 80 years untold numbers of area businesses have donated not just funds but products and services — even pony rides.

Students at the Burnt Mills School rode in the pony-drawn cart of the Young & Hipp dairy products business of Somerville.

The pony was the company's mascot and also pulled Santa's sleigh in the Somerville Christmas parade.

During the early years, the treatment program was one of adapted physical education, academic instruction, functional speech therapy, and recreation.

Given the school's location along the Raritan River, a summer camping program was added in 1947, 1948, and 1949.



AID SPASTICS—Mr. and Mrs. Walter D. Matheny are pictured training a group of children at the **Burnt Mills School** and Summer Camp for Paralysis Correction near Pluckemin. The couple, whose own child is a member of the class, direct the school which attempts to develop greater self-sufficiency in spastic paralysis victims. Mrs. Matheny is shown at left working with her son, Charles.

Courier-News June 4, 1947



The Burnt Mills Summer Camp showing college-age counsellors, staff, residents, and volunteers. Summer Camps were run in 1947, 1948 and 1949.

“The primary objective of the [summer] camp is to give the handicapped child an opportunity to compete in recreational activities with others on a level on which they will have an opportunity to be successful. We feel that the handicapped has just as much right to have fun as the normal child and this opportunity is rare.”

—*Paterson [NJ] Evening News*
June 6, 1947

Physical facilities of the camp included four “newly-constructed dormitory buildings, recreational and dining hall, large bath house, eighteen acres of land with recreational facilities and a beach on the river.”

Word spreads.

Child Travels 6,680 Miles For Paralysis Treatment

Bedminster Township — One of the newest students at **Burnt Mills School** for Paralysis Correction has come 6,680 miles to learn how to walk and talk like other children.

He is Andre Amram, six-year-old son of Lucian Amram, a partner in the international import firm of Shath and Amram Inc. of Tokyo. Andre has lived always in Japan, although he is a French citizen by inheritance.

A victim of a type of cerebral palsy classified as athetoid, Andre was taken by his parents to specialists all over the Continent before they met Dr. George Deever in New York, a noted rehabilitation specialist and a staff consultant for the **Burnt Mills school**.

Burnt Mills Suggested

Dr. Deever suggested Burnt Mills and a flow of correspondence began when the Amrams returned to Tokyo between them and Mr. and Mrs. Walter Matheney, directors of the school.

Andre, and Donnie Mair, 9, a student from Venezuela, live.

Donnie, like Andre, lives in a country foreign to his citizenship, which is Scottish. A pupil at Burnt Mills for a year, he expects to be sent to a school in Scotland soon, greatly recovered.

Foreign Students Taken

Burnt Mills School is one of the two correctional schools east of the Mississippi to have foreign students, Mr. Matheney said. The school also acts in an advisory capacity for paralysis correction centers in Canada, England and Scotland. At present there are 37 children, mostly from New Jersey and New York, but one from Oklahoma and another from Michigan.

Andre is a very handsome child with sparkling, vivacious eyes. He points proudly to his picture that hangs on the wall of the entrance hall along with photographs of all the other children. He shows excitement and interest when his playmates are spoken of. Soon

Courier-News
May 23, 1949

Key Outside Advisers



Dr. George G. Deaver

In 1946, when the Mathenys launched the Burnt Mills school, there were very few qualified facilities with competent trained staff for the treatment of children with cerebral palsy. Moreover, the Mathenys, though filled with passion and drive, started the school on a financial shoestring with no clear evidence it would succeed.

Nevertheless, two of the most prominent physicians in the fields of rehabilitation medicine and cerebral palsy stepped forward to help the Mathenys at that critical moment.

One was Dr. George G. Deaver, of the Institute for the Crippled and Disabled (later the Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine at NYU), who had met Walter through the latter's work in the Army. The other was Dr. Winthrop Morgan Phelps, who had established his own clinic for the treatment of cerebral palsy in Baltimore. Walter would later study with Dr. Phelps.

Dr. Deaver reportedly said to Walter: "If you are damned fool enough to start a school for these kids, I'll be damned fool enough to help you."



Dr. Winthrop Morgan Phelps

Success at Burnt Mills Also Brought Challenges



Chuck's grandparents,
Charles ("Spikey") and
Maude ("Biddy") Hughes.

—As word spread about the Burnt Mills School and the number of students increased, how could the Mathenys handle the growth?

—Marguerite's parents, Charles and Maude Hughes, moved from Minnesota to New Jersey to help, and they remained for years. They proved to be a key factor in getting the Burnt Mills school running efficiently, with Charles as business manager and Maude as housekeeper.

—With an increase in public awareness and the number of students, the school came under inspection by the State of New Jersey.

—Inspectors determined that the school facility did not meet State standards, and the Mathenys determined that the facility was not worth spending the required funds to make it meet those standards, so they decided to move.

—Which brings us back to Far Hills.



The Far Hills Building — November 1949 to December 1954

With the move from Burnt Mills to Far Hills, the name
was changed to the Walter D. Matheny School



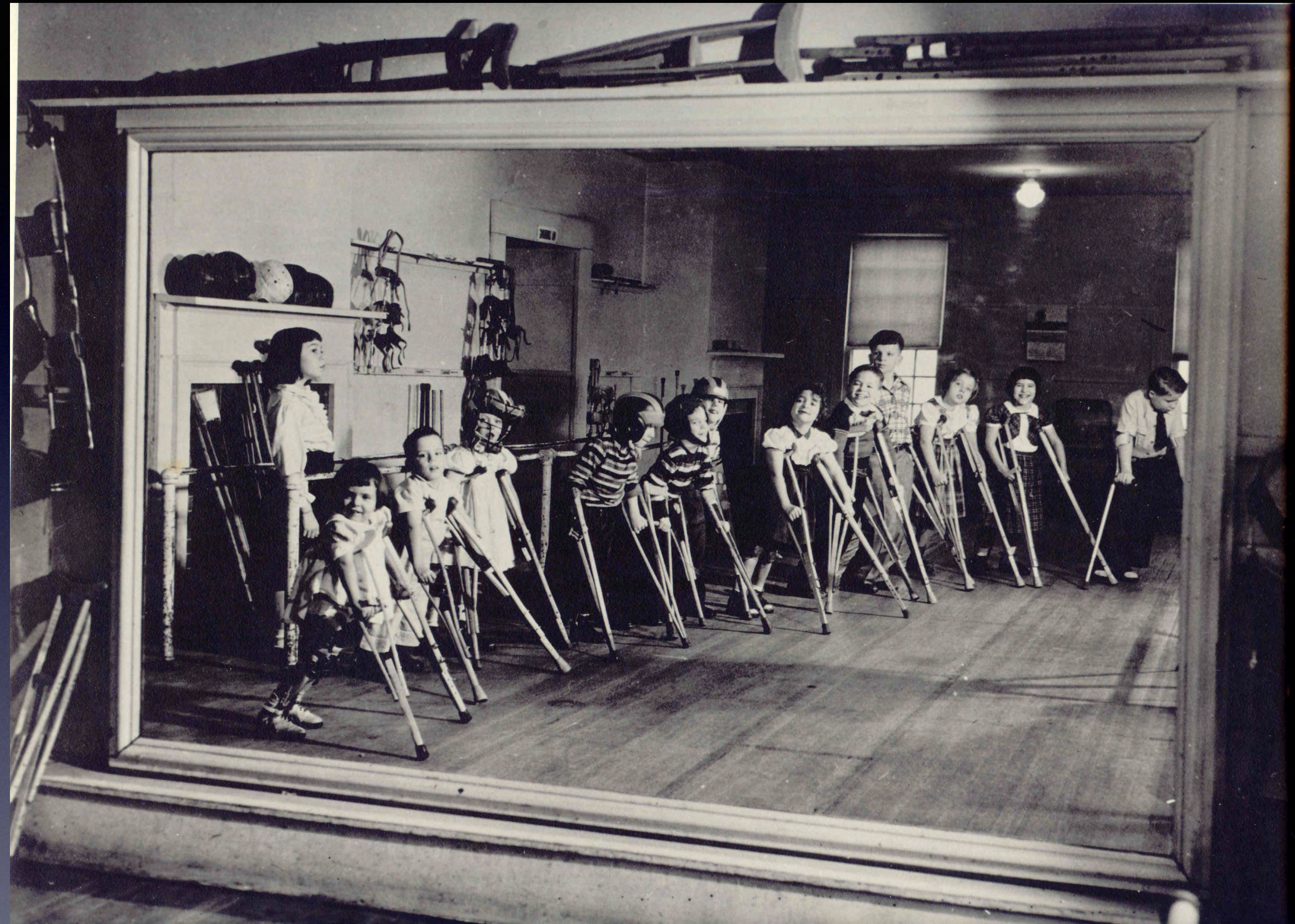


With the move to larger—but functionally less than ideal—quarters in Far Hills, the treatment program was expanded to include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and special education services.

In April 1950, the school was incorporated as a non-profit with a board of trustees.

During the years in Far Hills, a program of services was developed to meet the needs of a child with cerebral palsy and the additional handicap of blindness. "This was a pioneering effort and the first program of its kind."

The special services program was expanded to include other basic needs, such as routine visual and dental examinations, pediatric examinations, and psychological evaluations and studies.



The Matheny School in Far Hills.



Before the move to Peapack in late 1954, the Matheny school in Far Hills had a staff of 34 and 42 patients ages 3 to 16.

A treatment room in the Far Hills school.

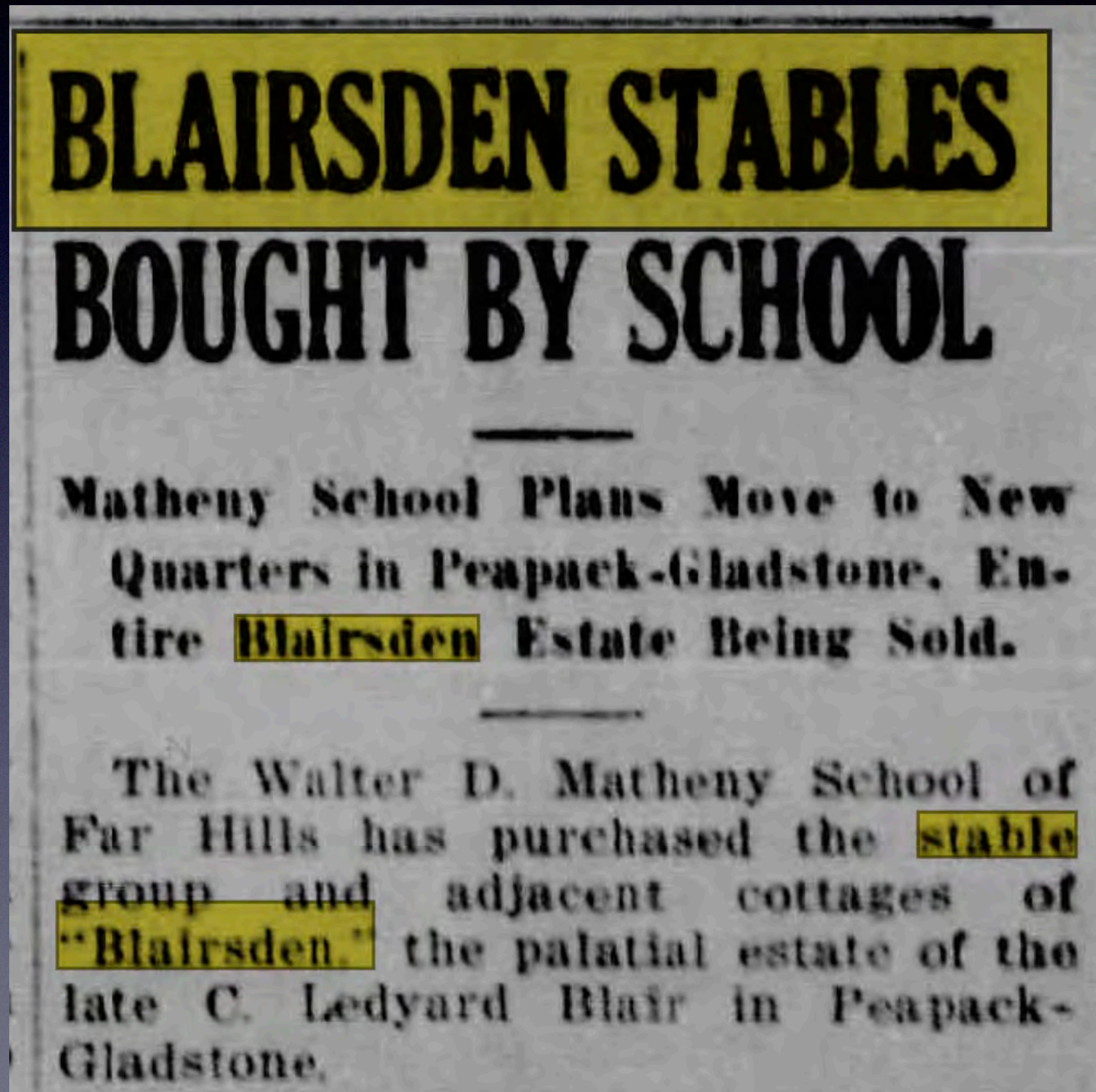
Before long it became apparent that the rented facility in Far Hills was neither adequate in size nor appropriately laid out for the rehabilitation work of the school. And, increasingly, it became more of a challenge to meet government standards.

After a search, a 38-acre portion of Blairsdon, the former C. Ledyard Blair estate in Peapack-Gladstone, had become available and was purchased in 1951. An additional 43 acres were later purchased.

The property included five of the original outbuilding structures on the Blair estate, including the large and elegant brick and marble stable and carriage barn.

THE WALTER D. MATHENY SCHOOL PLANS MOVE TO PEAPACK-GLADSTONE

The original 38-acre tract, which included five brick out-buildings on the Blairsdén estate, cost \$38,000.



Bernardsville News
November 8, 1951

In 1952, not long after purchasing the Peapack property, the Matheny family expanded with the adoption of Mary Ann.

Chuck was clearly thrilled!





The Matheny family circa 1960.



1926 “sketch map of Blair's den”
by Frank Stone Tainter, C.E.



Blairsden mansion at left. Designed by Carrère & Hastings—architects of the New York Public Library—the 50,000 square-foot residence was completed in 1903.

Blair coach barn and stable, below.





Blairsdon stable and carriage barn, circa 1903.

The building also included the usual tack rooms and hay and feed storage, as well as housing for grooms and an elegant trophy room.

The building is extant today—although remodeled and enlarged to include the Proctor Center of Medicine and Dentistry, established in 2003 and named for former Matheny president and CEO, Steve Proctor.



Blairsdene
1930s aerial
photograph



shot

Segment of the 1930s aerial photograph of Blairsglen showing the stable and coach barn and other of the estate's outbuildings, all of which remain.

The oval shows the Blairs' horse track and, at the bottom, the skeet range.



Florence Jennings Blair driving her "tandem gig" on the track at Blairsdén.



Dr

Highland Ave

Matheny



Google Maps



Original Blairsdan auto garage; now Matheny offices.



The original Blairsden garage after it was converted to the residence of Jimmy Thomas, the Blairs' long-time groom and, later, chauffeur.

In the early Matheny years the building was occupied by female occupational and physical therapists and teachers.

The building is extant today as Matheny offices.



The “new” Blair garage adjacent to the stable / carriage barn.
In the early Matheny days it was converted to a residence for male staff.

BUILDING CAMPAIGN AT HALF-WAY MARK

Matheny School to Benefit from
Concert, October 17, in Morristown
High School.

The Walter D. **Matheny** School for
Paralysis Correction has reached the
half-way mark in its campaign for
\$93,000 for transferral of the school to
the former Ledyard Blair estate in
Peapack-Gladstone, a spokesman for
the school announced this week.

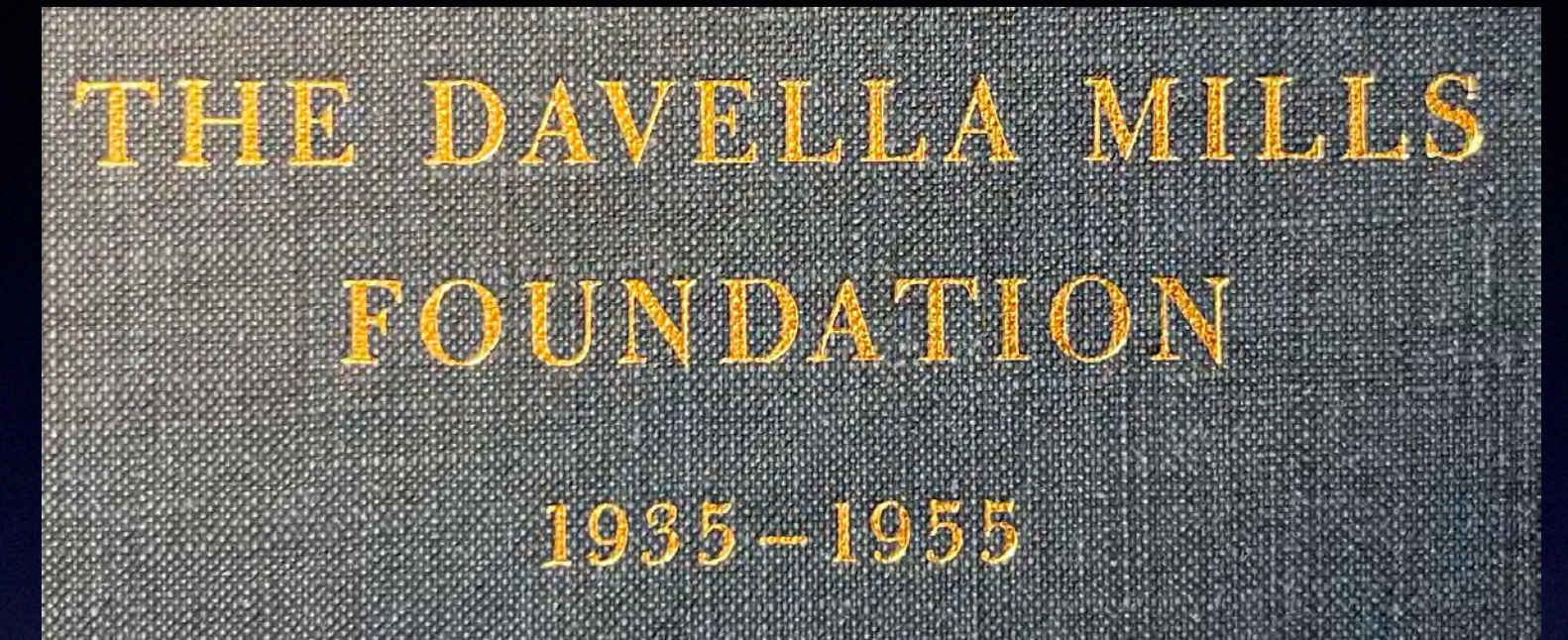
Bernardsville News
October 2, 1952

With the prospect of building and equipping the new building in Peapack, fund-raising in the 1950s was always a key part of Walter Matheny's work, with the aid of his college friend and board president Francis O'Brien. Walter gave countless talks and the two men applied to some 300 foundations, making innumerable presentations and providing countless tours of the school and the new Peapack site.

In 1951, just five days before an option expired for Matheny to purchase the Peapack property, a \$25,000 grant came through from the Davella Mills Foundation of Montclair and the remainder of the funds were obtained to close the \$38,000 deal. Appropriately, the Davella Foundation had been "Created for the Purpose of Benefiting Mankind."

In June 1952, a critical donation came in the form of a \$25,000 pledge from the Kresge Foundation—provided the school raised the balance of the building fund.

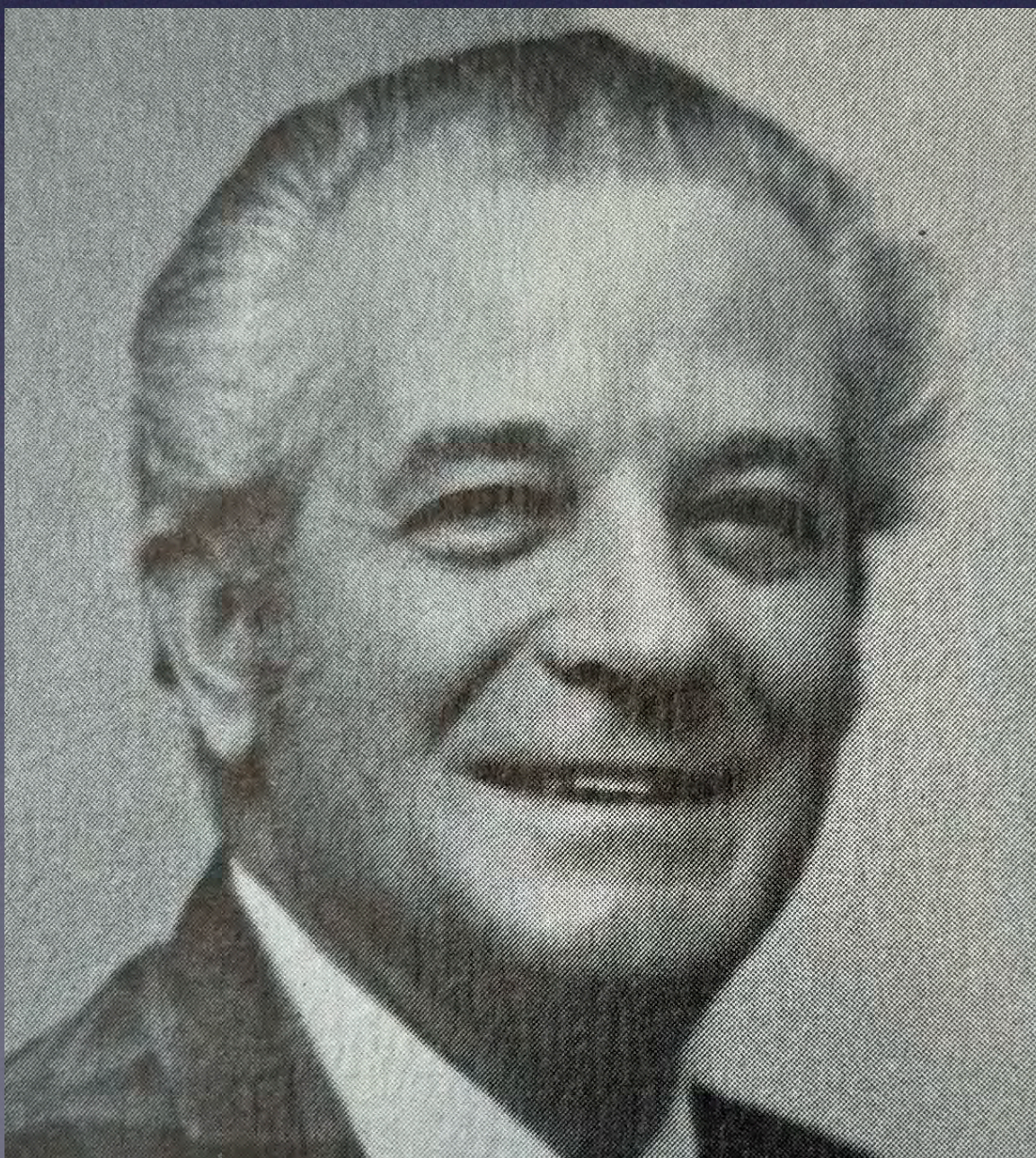
Another big boost came from the Mary Doane Foundation, which had made a \$10,000 grant. Walter went to Mrs. Doane's house in Newark to thank her in person for the donation. She was so impressed with his personal visit that at the end of the year she sent an additional grant of \$25,000. Once again, after thanking the foundation for the additional grant, the Matheny school received another grant for \$50,000 "to get the building started."



BENEFIT CONCERT FOR AREA SCHOOL

**Bernardsville Pianist to Play in
Morristown Tomorrow Night. Many
Are Patrons.**

Works by Scarlatti, Bach-Busoni,
Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Ka-
balevsky are among those selected by
Marino Nardelli, Bernardsville pianist,
for his concert tomorrow night, Oc-
tober 17, at Morristown High School.
The concert will be a benefit for the
Walter D. Matheny School for Para-
lysis Correction, of Far Hills.



Bernardsville News
October 16, 1952

Marino Nardelli

Fundraising for constructing the new Matheny School included appeals to foundations—24 of which made donations—as well as individuals and local businesses.

Many local tradesmen donated free labor and building materials. Anthony Ferrante, for one, a builder and quarry owner from Bernardsville, built a road at no charge from Blair Drive up to the new hilltop site.

Special events were also held. One was a classical piano concert at the Morristown High School in October 1952 by piano virtuoso Marino Nardelli, a resident of Bernardsville.

Nardelli, the son of the founder-director of the Verdi Conservatory in Naples, Italy, graduated from the Royal Conservatory of Music in Naples at age 16, the youngest member of his class.

After moving to the United States in the 1930s, Nardelli gave concerts across the country, as well as in Canada. He taught music at the Gill-St. Bernard's and Morristown-Beard Schools and was the director of the New Jersey Choral Society and organist-choir director at Grace Episcopal Church in Madison.

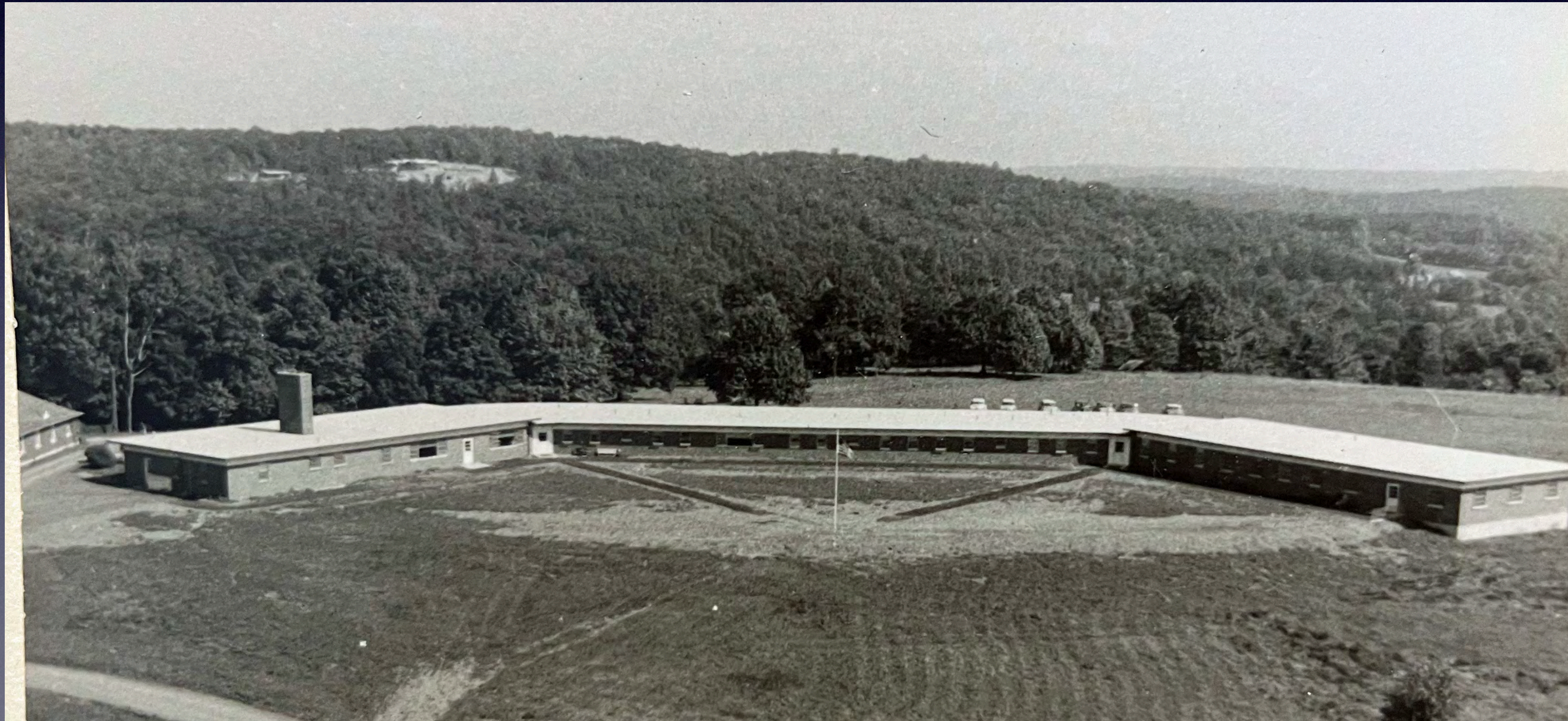


From the groundbreaking on March 14, 1954, the new building on the hill was completed nine months later.

The original construction budget of \$93,000 in October 1952 had risen to \$233,480 by March 1954. The original plan was to utilize and remodel only the five existing Blairsden structures.

John H. Terry, a builder in Bernardsville—and later a devoted trustee—advised the board to construct a new, one-floor building, which he said would be less expensive and more efficient than remodeling the older buildings. The existing buildings were, however, altered to provide housing for 35 staff members, a gymnasium, and storage and other functional areas.

The new one-story, 19,000-square-foot building had living quarters for 50 children.



JOHN H. TERRY

BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

BERNARDSVILLE, N. J.

BERNARDSVILLE 8-1352

July 20th, 1953

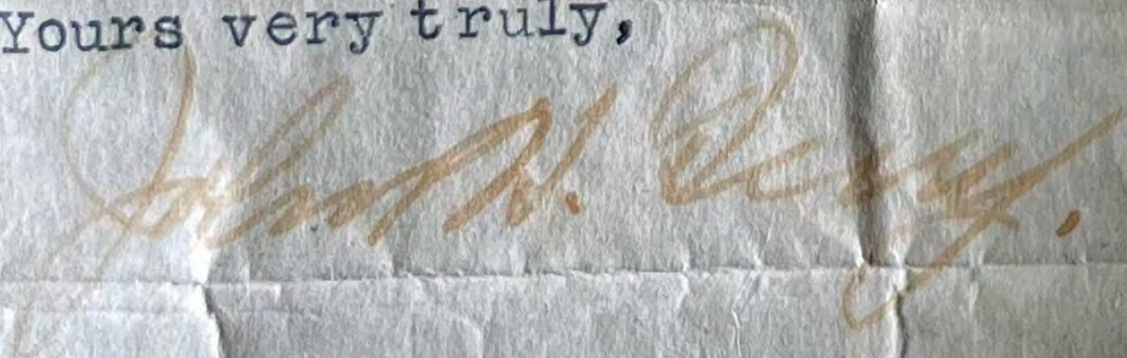
The Walter D. Matheny School Inc.,
Peapack, N. J.

Gentlemen;

We agree herein, to supply material and labor to complete the erection of your new building in accordance with plans and specifications as prepared by Peter Paul Dupay, Architect, for the sum of \$223,000.00.

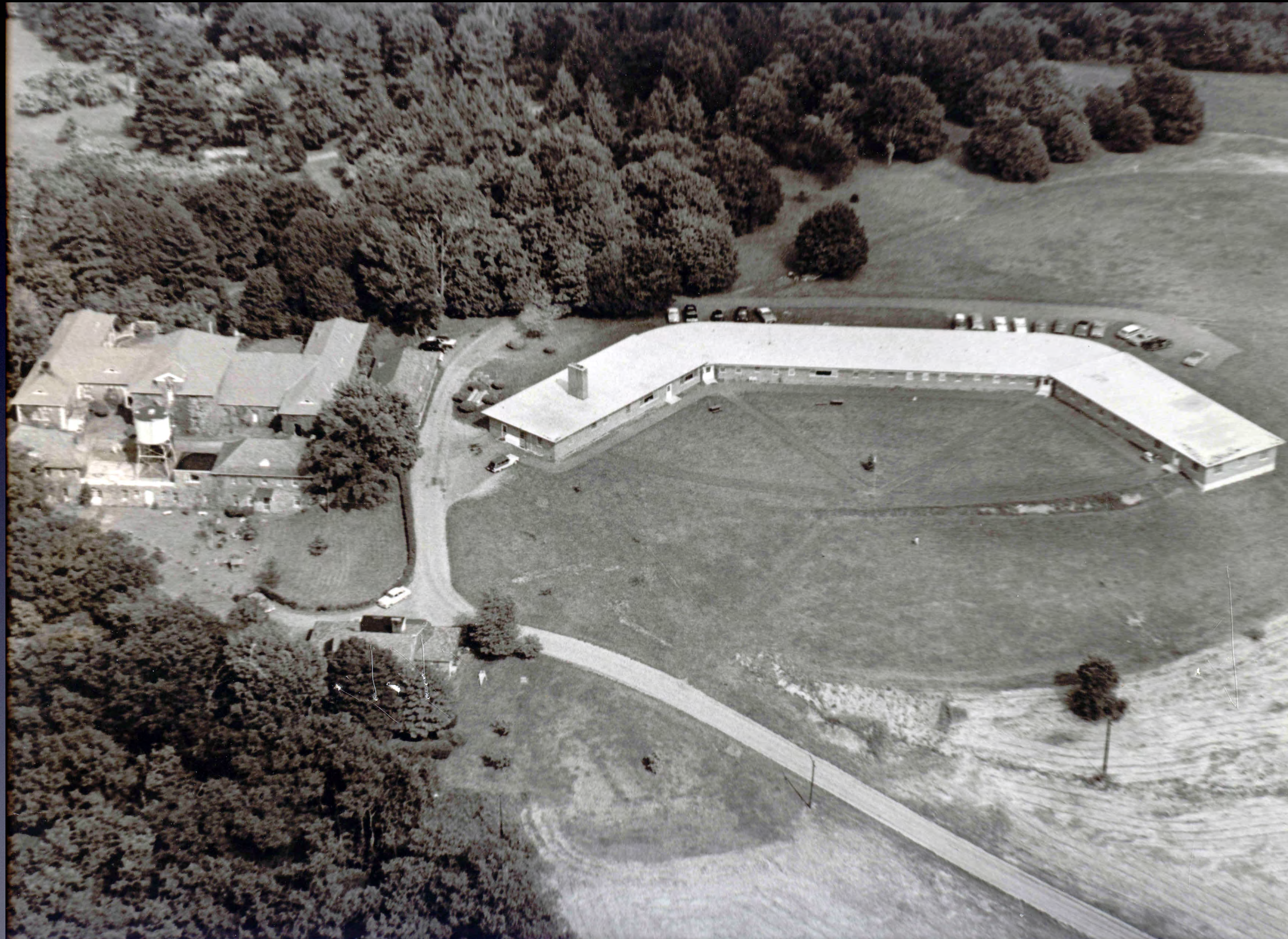
Alternate for Brick Veneer add \$11,080.00.
Alternate for Cement Plaster on Exterior add \$2,900.00.
For two coats of paint on Exterior walls add the sum of \$980.00.

Yours very truly,



jht/nr

John H. Terry's July 20, 1953, bid to construct the new building in Peapack—\$223,000 plus \$11,000 for the brick veneer.



After the March 14, 1954, groundbreaking ceremony, construction proceeded rapidly and the new building was completed 9 months later.

The modified U-shaped building had been designed by a local Basking Ridge architect, Peter Paul Dupay.

Educated at the University of Notre Dame, Dupay had designed residences in the Somerset Hills, served in the Army Corps of Engineers during World War II, and for 15 years was an architect for the Franciscan Order in New York designing churches, libraries, and seminaries.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF
THE WALTER D. MATHENY SCHOOL
ANNOUNCE THE REMOVAL OF THE SCHOOL FROM
FAR HILLS, NEW JERSEY
TO OUR NEW SCHOOL BUILDING AT
PEAPACK, NEW JERSEY

The new building was completed in December 1954, and children and staff moved in on December 23—what a Christmas present!

An open house was held in January 1955, and a formal dedication was held that May.

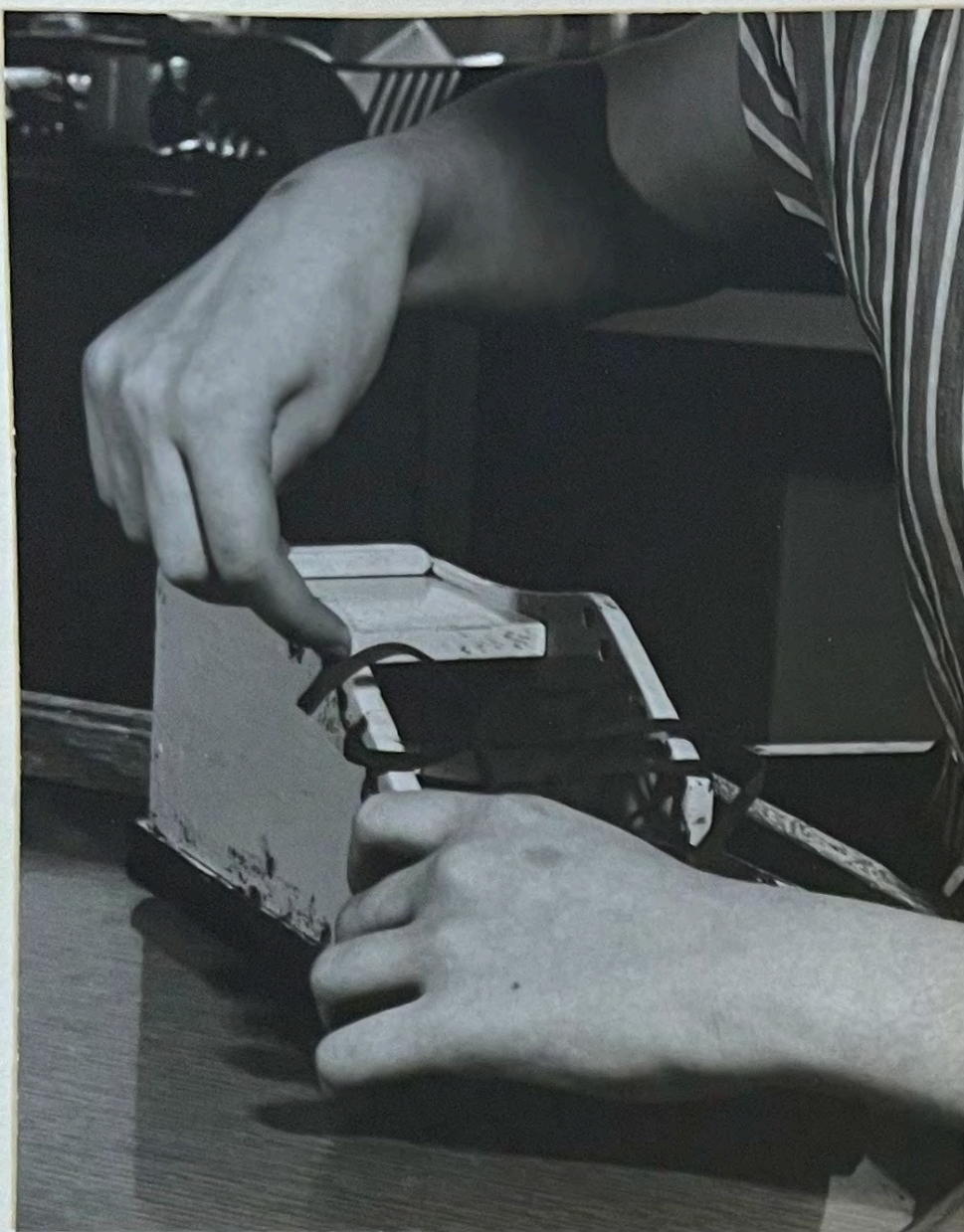


—Photo by Harland S. Frost
SCHOOL HOLDS OPEN HOUSE—The new Walter D. Matheny School for Paralysis Correction Inc. in Far Hills held open house yesterday. Mr. and Mrs. Matheny (left) greet Mr. and Mrs. John Shaw of Denville. The land was purchased in 1951 and ground for the school was broken last March.

Courier-News
January 10, 1955

The school offered an increasing range of therapies, medical services, and educational programs during the 1950s.

The Matheny School was acknowledged to be the foremost New Jersey school for children with cerebral palsy, and was rated one of the top two out of about 50 across the country.



-- Learning to lace the shoe with the use of a teaching aid will lead to greater self-independence.

Self-feeding is of great importance. --

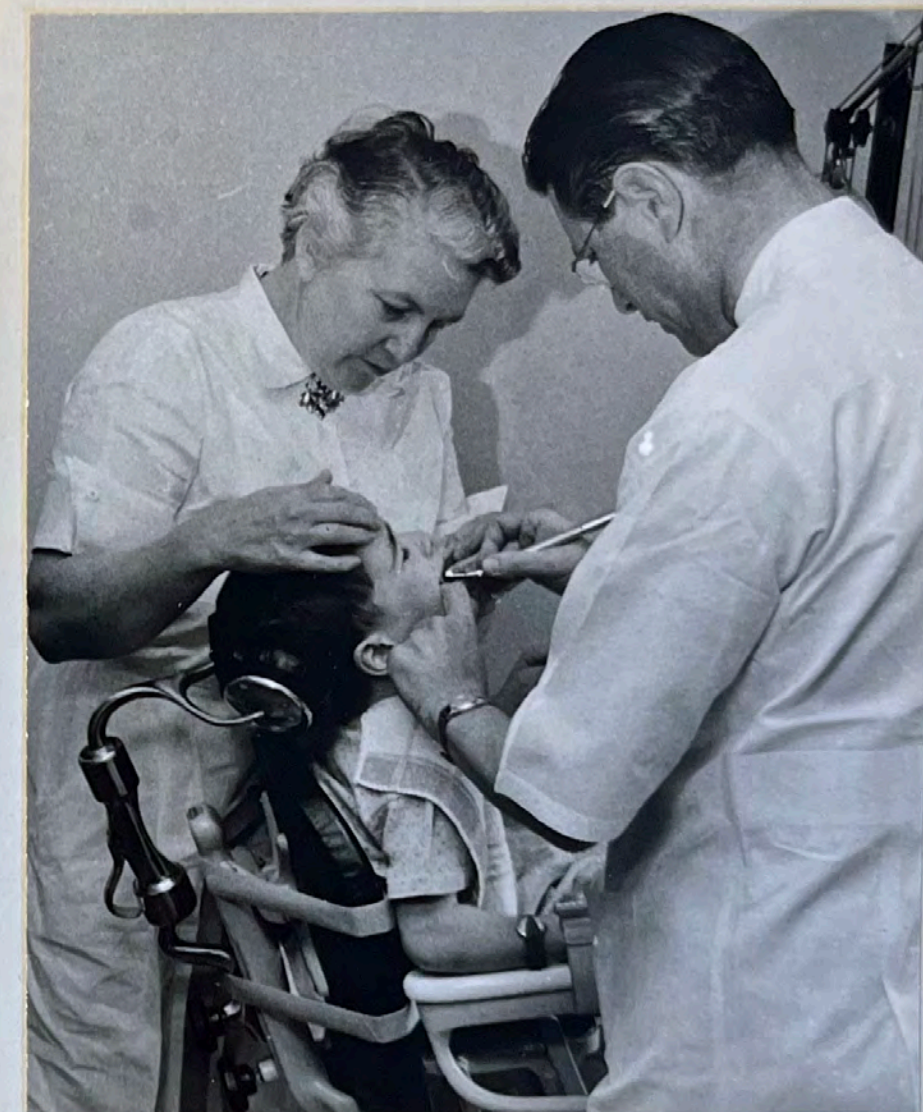


-- They can be helpful.



-- Ophthalmological Services

Dental Services --

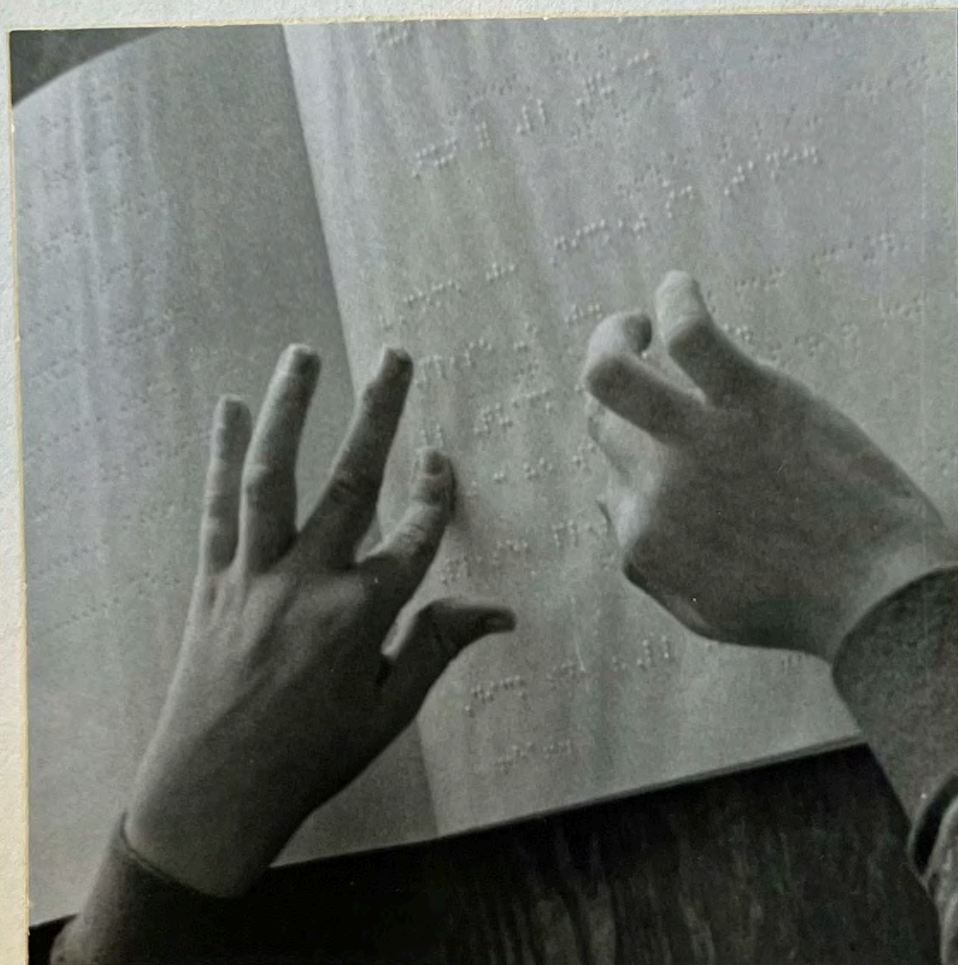


-- Laboratory Services





- . . The school was the first organization to undertake the task of combining a treatment program with an academic program for the cerebral palsied child with a visual handicap.
- . . Special equipment is available to meet the problems of this group of children and includes a magnifying viewer, Braille blocks, and sensory stimulation materials.
- . . The school is used as a testing grounds for the development of teaching materials and teaching methods. Many of the theories developed at the school are now in use on a wide basis in other public and private treatment centers and schools.



Hands that see

- . . . The cerebral palsied child may have certain learning difficulties that are associated with the brain damage condition. These special disabilities must be approached with rather special techniques in order for the child to be able to proceed in an academic program.
- . . . The greatest difference in the education program of the school and that of a regular school is in the various means of expression employed by the children. A teacher must be able to understand many means of expression and particularly so when speech is inadequate or hand control difficult.
- . . . The regular class room work is supplemented by various "club" activities. Some of these activities are as follows:

Student Council
Current Events Club
Science Club
Junior Audubon Society
Junior Red Cross
Scouting





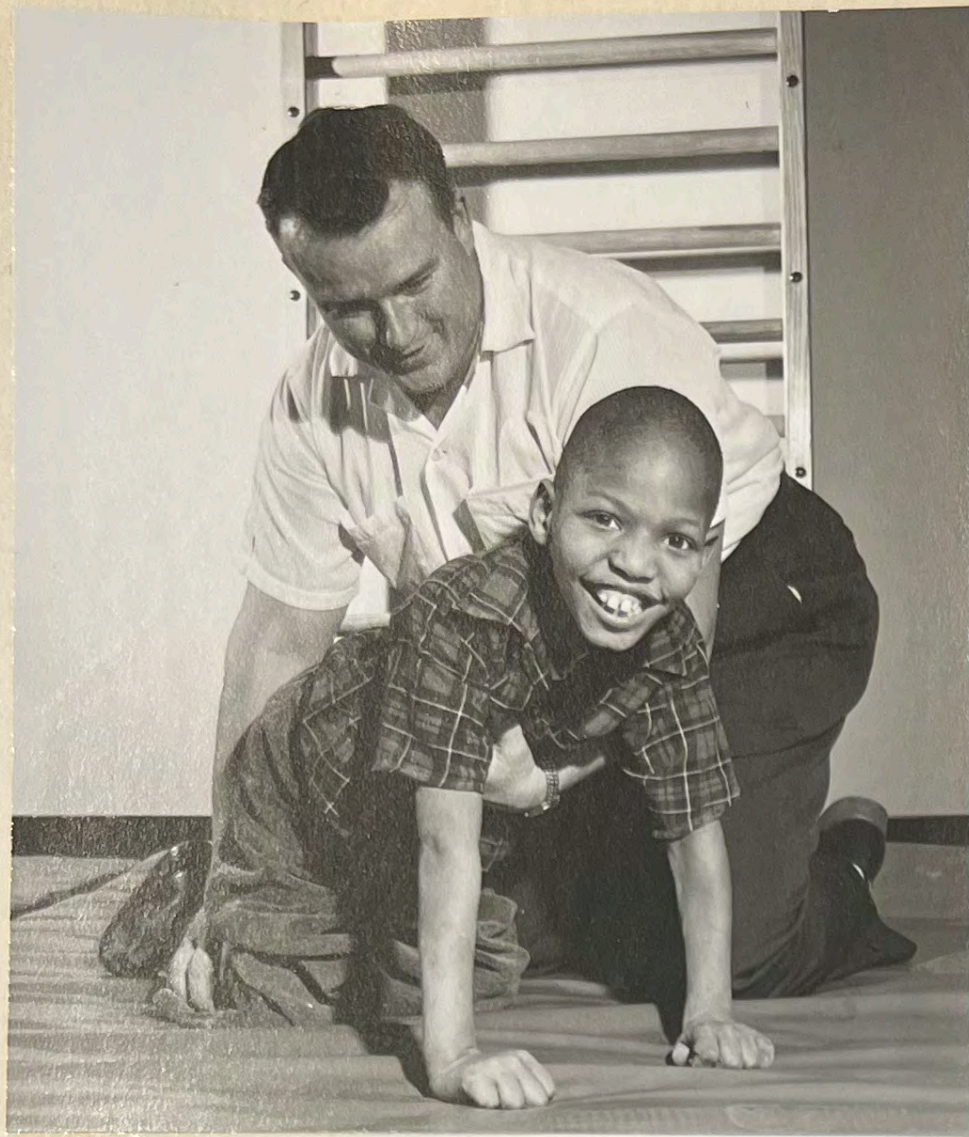
Learning to speak by sensory imitation



Another step - To independence

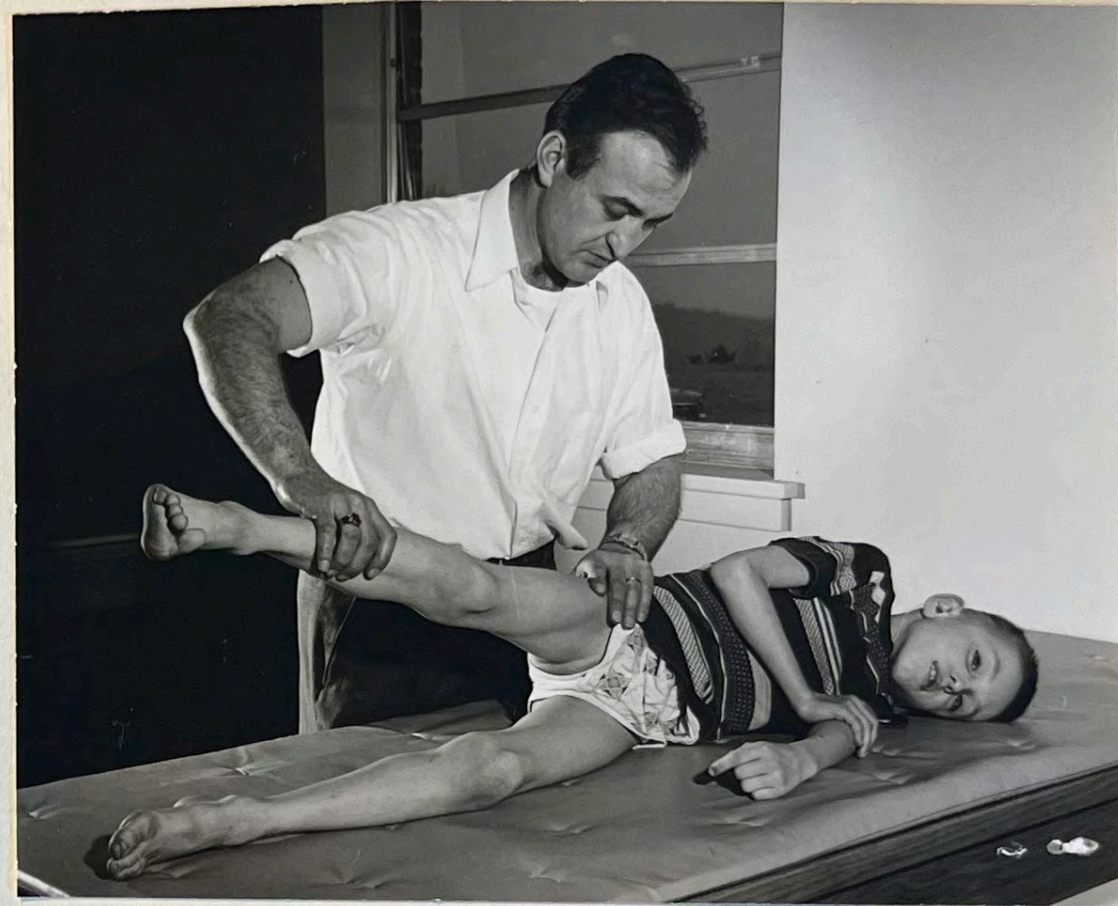


Crutch walking - A learned activity.



-- Learning to crawl may be tedious
but it can also be fun.

Individual muscle training --
strengthens weak muscles.



-- Parallel bar walking helps to
develop walking patterns.



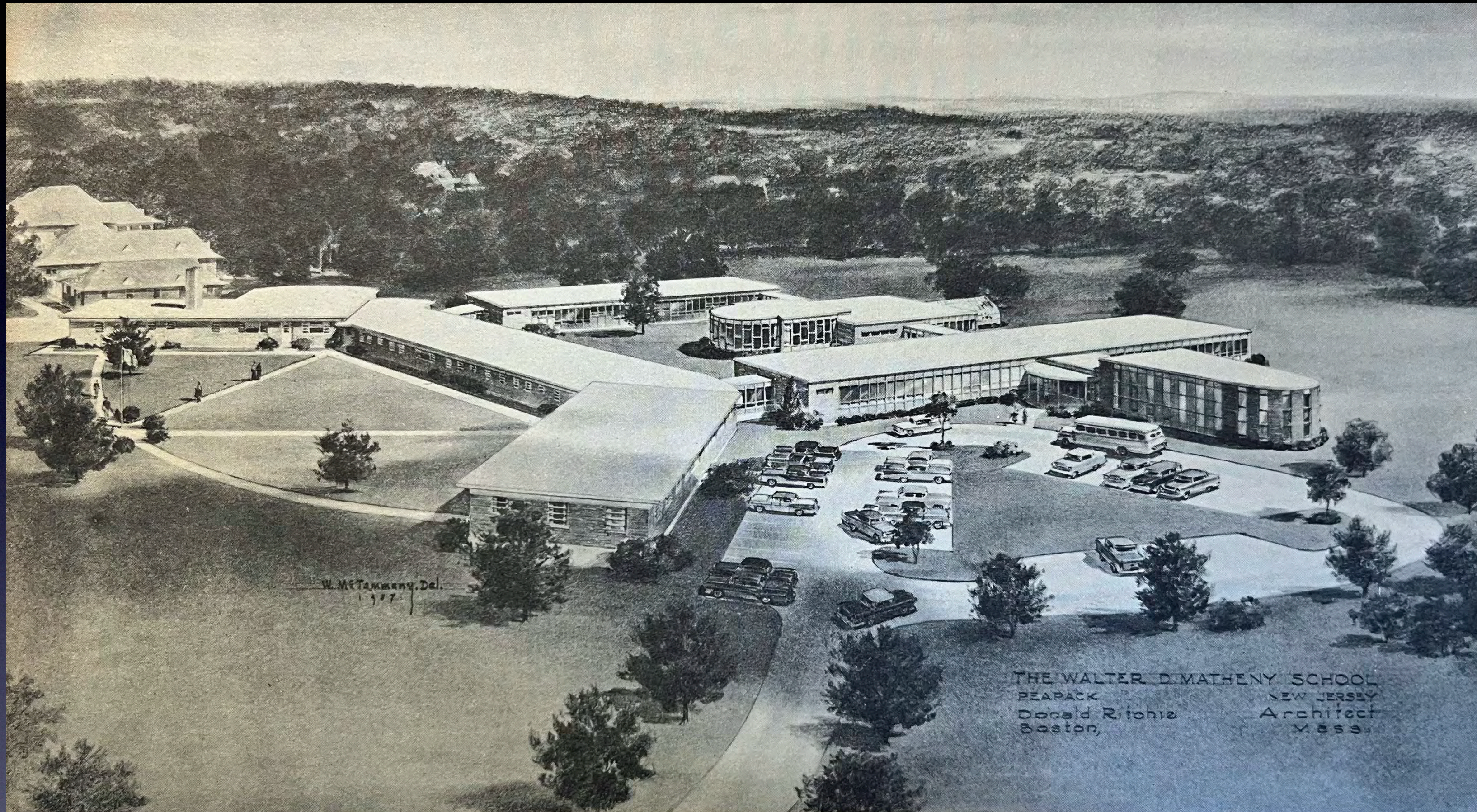
Learning to type and to use the Braille writer.



Marguerite Matheny and a resident.

Matheny Has Continued to Grow In Many Ways

In Its Physical Footprint, the Range of Care and Therapies Offered, and in Community Support Programs—All to Enhance Clients' Independence and Their Quality and Enjoyment of Life.



The Present Building and Planned Additions
To The
Walter D. Matheny School

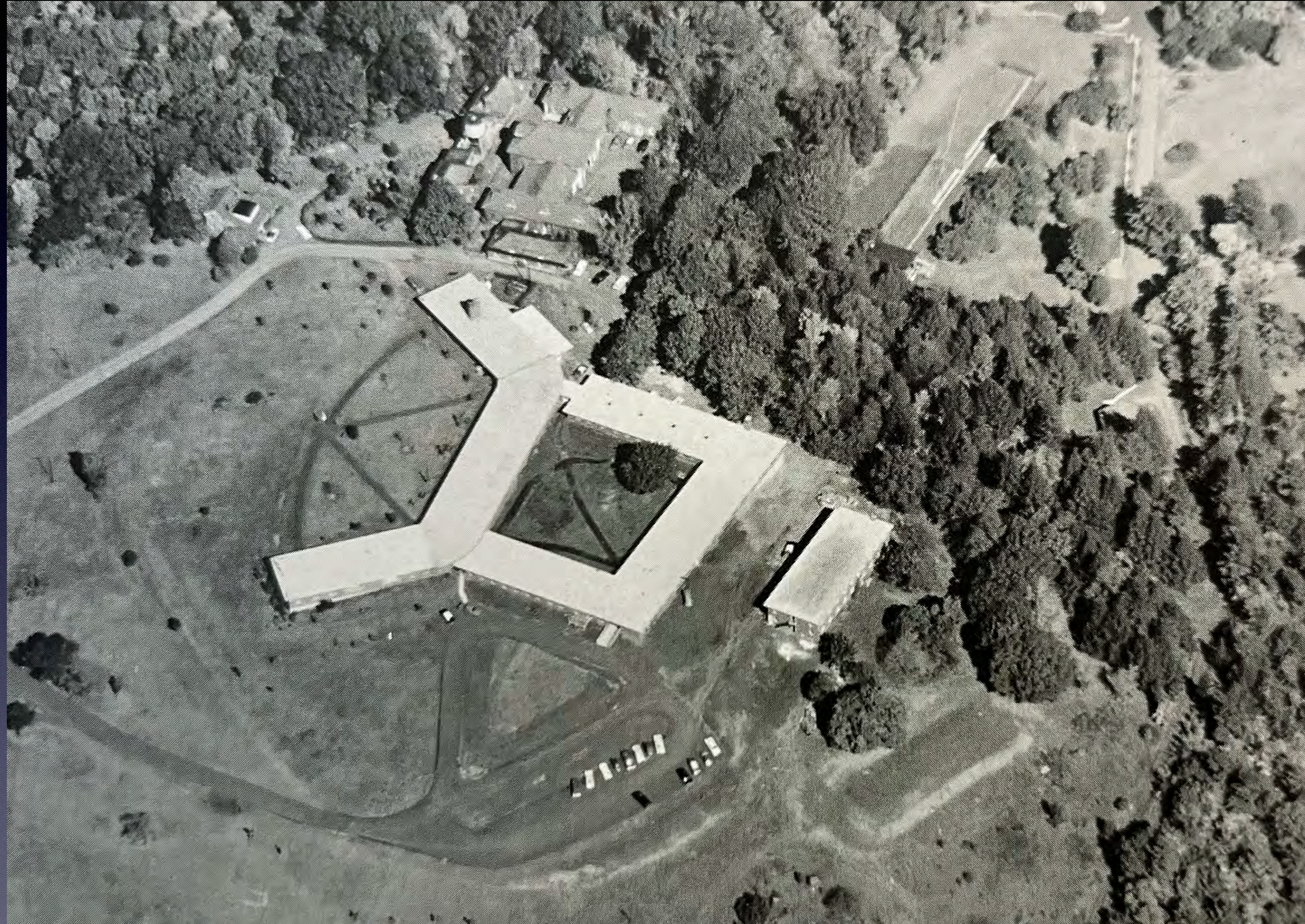
Growth appears to have been fast.

By 1957, only two years after the original building was completed, large additions were proposed.

This is the architect's rendering of the proposed, but unbuilt, 1957 additions.

(Donald Ritchie, architect, Boston)

New Evaluation and Planning Center (1964)



1964 also brought a change in name from the Walter D. Matheny School to the Matheny School.

In 1964 the original U-shaped building (at left) was enlarged with the addition of the 23,000-square-foot Evaluation and Planning Center and an adjacent staff building (the first of two).

The new building included therapy facilities with advanced equipment, dormitories for students, an enlarged cafeteria area, 17 staff rooms, and 8 staff apartments.

The new center allowed for a then-innovative program of evaluation whereby medical specialists, psychiatrists, psychologists, and staff personnel could study patients over a 12-week period. After correlating their findings, the professionals met with parents and outlined the treatment options, which could involve transfer to Matheny's inpatient center, treatment in an outpatient program, or admission to a custodial institution. Evaluation of children with multiple disabilities was a focus of the center.



Matheny

Matheny
Main Entrance

The Campus Expands

In August 1978 Matheny paid \$500,000 to acquire an adjoining 53 acres from the “Windfall” estate of the late Percival C. Keith. The purchase finally gave Matheny direct access to Highland Avenue. Today, Matheny’s entire tract consists of nearly 82 acres.

Like the original 38-acre parcel acquired in 1951, the new tract had also been part of the Blairsdens estate of C. Ledyard Blair. It included what had originally been called “White Cottage,” an enlarged 19th century farmhouse along Highland Avenue where the Blair family resided while building their mansion. The “White Cottage” land had been sold by Blair to P.C. Keith in 1947. After Keith altered and enlarged the house, he renamed it “Windfall.”

Four months after acquiring the new tract, Matheny sold off 10 acres—including the “Windfall” residence—to a private buyer, but in the process recouped about two-thirds of the original purchase price of the entire 53-acre tract. Years later, “Windfall” was destroyed by fire.



Above: the Blairs’ “White Cottage”

Below: Keith’s “Windfall” (later destroyed by fire)



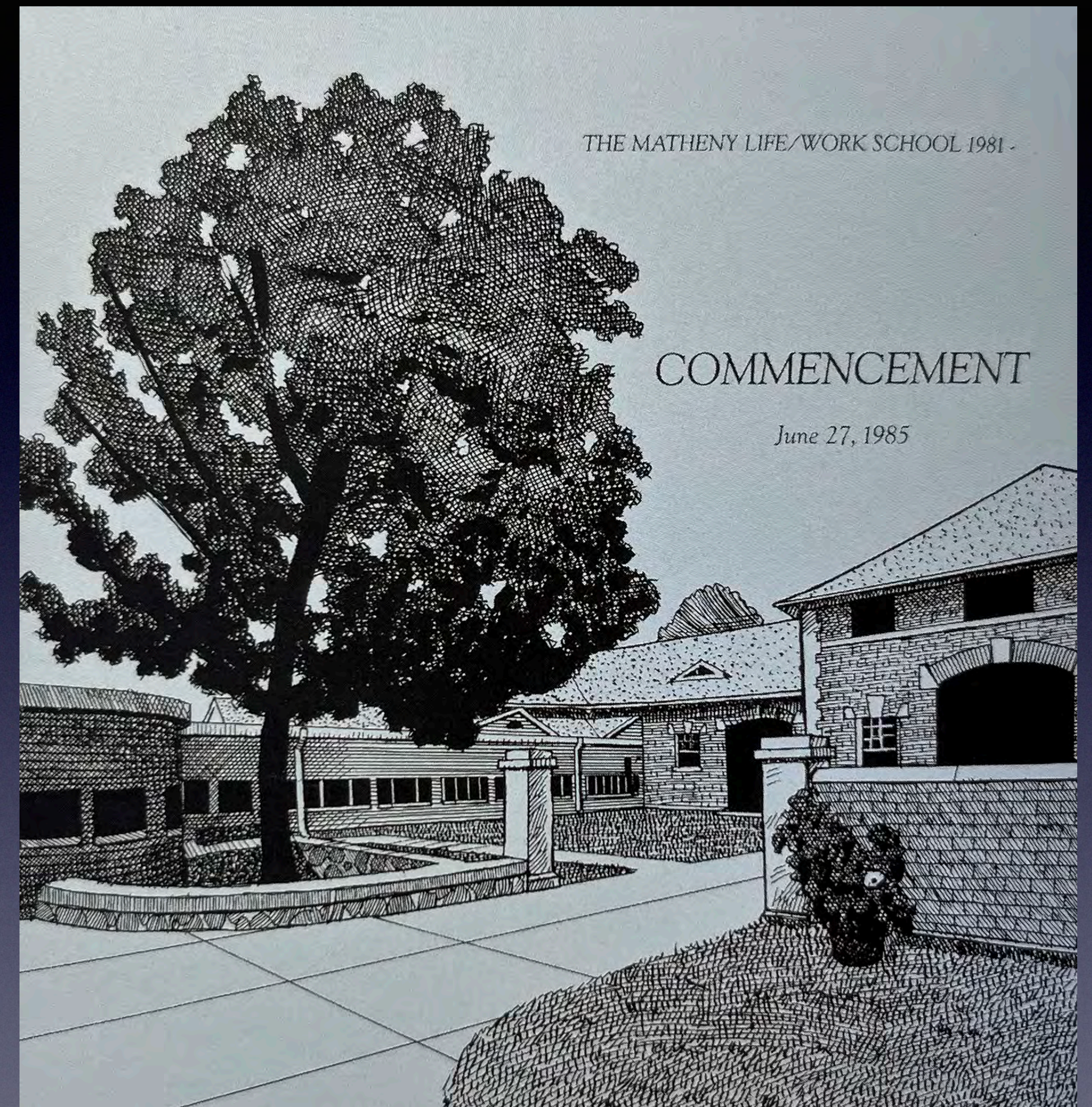
Life Enrichment Therapy (originally the Life / Work School)

In the early 1980s a then-innovative program was developed to prepare severely disabled, mentally alert young adults for the “real world,” so that each person could achieve the highest level of independence possible within the limitations of his or her disability.

The work component of the program included vocational and pre-vocational training to prepare students for jobs.

Originally called the Life / Work School, it was housed in a renovated wing of the original Blairsdien carriage house and an adjacent new, ten-unit bedroom wing.

The new facility was dedicated on December 1, 1981 — the 35th anniversary of the founding of the Matheny School.



June 27, 1985 — Graduation of the first four students from the Life / Work School



Steven Proctor Center of Medicine and Dentistry

Opened in 2003 in part of the original Blair stable and carriage house, the Center provides medical and dental services for both Matheny inpatients and community members with complex disabilities.

Medical services range from primary care to specialties including gynecology, optometry, urology, swallowing dysfunction, psychiatry, and pediatrics. The state-of-the-art dental clinic provides all services from cleaning to extraction and everything in between.

Group Homes

Matheny has established seven group homes in Somerset, Sussex, and Warren counties. Shared housing helps residents live more independently and enriches their lives in many ways, from interacting with each other in a home setting, to meeting neighbors, volunteering, becoming involved in community activities, and attending Matheny's adult day programs.



Franklin Township home



Opening the first group home – 1992



Groundbreaking for the 2 new Far Hills homes – 2022

Adult Learning Centers

Matheny operates two adult learning centers to assist those 21 and older to attain their highest level of independent functioning.

One center is in Hillsborough, just south of Somerville, and the other is on the Peapack-Gladstone campus.

Participants come for full days of classes and other activities.

A variety of sports and exercise options are available, as well as a technology / computer lab; Yoga, meditation, and sensory stimulation; and group exercises. Also, writing, dance, choreography, painting and digital art classes are offered through Matheny's Arts Access program.



Arts Access Program (Est. 1993)
The Robert Schonhorn Arts Center
Opened in 2000





The innovative and award-winning Arts Access Program was established in 1993. It gives individuals with complex disabilities the opportunity to create fine art, using innovative techniques and processes.

The client-artists work side by side with staff members called “facilitators”—artists in their own right who serve as the clients’ arms and legs.

The clients are adults who use wheelchairs, have limited range of motion, and are often nonverbal. Most of the client-artists provide directives to the facilitators through computer-driven communication devices; boards with words, pictures, and numbers; eye movements; and head motions.

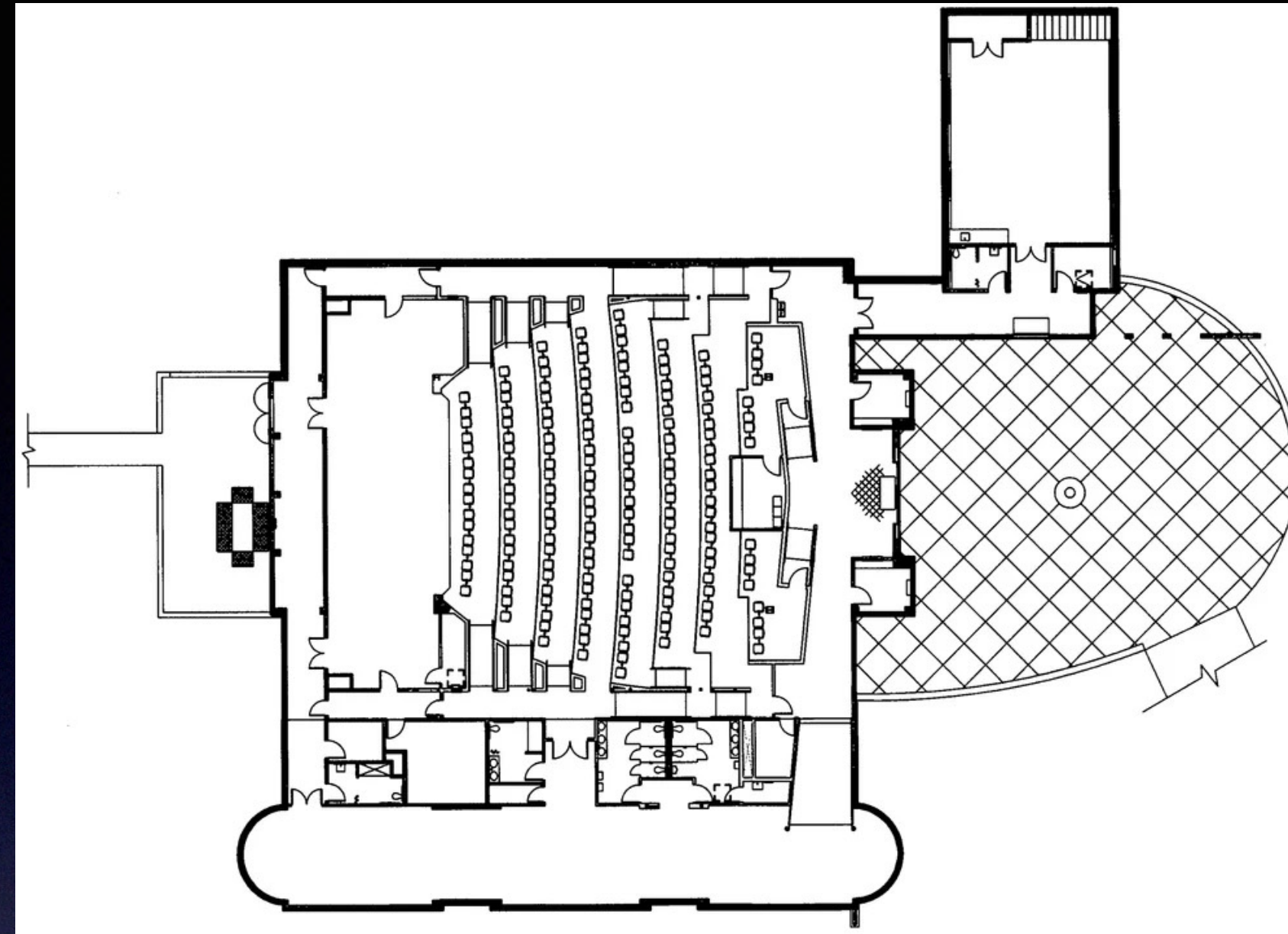
What started out as a visual arts program has expanded to include digital art, digital sculpture, a dance and drama program, and creative writing.



The \$4.2 million Robert Schonhorn Arts Center opened in 2000.

Designed by Ford Farewell Architects of Princeton, the building was the winner of a design excellence award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In addition to the auditorium—where seats can be converted from traditional to wheelchair-accessible—the center also includes a versatile multi-purpose classroom / workshop area and a gallery with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.



Untitled
(Excerpt)

This morning was beautiful.
Snow covered the ground
and the bare trees glistened
with little flecks of snow
all over them.
It was quite warm
and pleasant,
as I for one hate
the bitter cold.
All of our weather is
mixed up.
I don't know what
tomorrow will be.
But I will just think of today.

Cheryl Chapin

Frustrated

I am frustrated.
I feel angry
because
I can't speak,
sing, or yell.
I'm not able
to move my arms
as much as I want to.
I'm not able to walk,
dance, run, jump, kick.
Sometimes I feel pain
in my thoughts.
I want to make today
a good day.

Dion Alston

Untitled
(Excerpt)

Joy. Family.
I want to get
married on the beach.
I feel excited.
He makes me laugh.
I love our love.

Faith Stolz

The Importance

How can I describe
the importance?
It's the people;
the talent
that they share;
the self-expression.
They help us experience,
because we cannot
do it at home.
Our home life
doesn't allow us
to make
creative dreams
come true.

Jenny Durr

Art Gallery and Artists in the Studio





This untitled 10-foot-tall fiberglass sculpture by Arts Access artist Stanley Bednarz was created in 2001.

It is a reproduction of an 8-inch foamcore maquette created by the artist.

Funded by The Friends of Matheny, it was the first sculpture to be erected in the Matheny sculpture garden.



Organized in 1983, The Friends of Matheny have since raised and donated \$4.1 million. The mission of the more than 100 dedicated volunteers is simple but critical: “To aid in the support of, and render services to, the Matheny Medical and Educational Center.”

The Second Chance Thrift Shop, now located in Wesley Hall on Church Street in Gladstone, behind the Methodist Church building, is Friends’ principal fundraising effort. Each year the Thrift Shop raises about \$150,000.

Donated funds over the years have benefited Matheny in a wide range of ways, including technology, such as iPads, Smart Boards and Smart Tables, and hallway TV monitors; to medical equipment and LiteGait walkers; a sensory perception room; adaptive sports equipment; theater and sporting event tickets for clients; and new bedroom furnishings and decorations for holidays.



Above: The Friends’ volunteers support and work at many fundraising events, including Miles for Matheny.

Left: Linda Horton, a former president of Friends and long-time manager of the Second Chance Thrift Shop.



Miles for Matheny

The late Lu Higgins (bottom right) was the brainchild behind Miles for Matheny, a signature fundraising event.

A longtime Matheny supporter, board member for 20 years, and trustee emerita, Lu, who used a wheelchair, conceived of the event as a way to bring together Matheny residents and the wider community, and by so doing help break the isolation faced by people with disabilities.

Initially called Walkin' & Wheelin', the event's inaugural year was 1998.

Left to right: Linda Horton, a former president of Friends of Matheny and manager of Friends' Second Chance thrift shop; her husband Bill; Lu Higgins; and Lu's husband Bob.



Chuck Matheny in Peapack-Gladstone's Liberty Park at a "Miles for Matheny Wheel, Walk, Run, Fun" Event

Walter Matheny, Founder Of School,



WALTER D. MATHENY
Dies At 66

By DOUG WILHELM

To many people near his home in Peapack, to all those who knew him or were ever touched by his work, this area has lost a special and irreplaceable man.

He was **Walter D. Matheny**, who died last Thursday, June 9 in Morristown Memorial Hospital, at the age of 66. Mr. **Matheny** and his wife, Mary Marguerite, founded the **Matheny** School in Peapack for children with cerebral palsy.

When he retired in 1975 as the guiding force behind one of the country's first and most effective private school-hospitals for the youthful handicapped, Mr. **Matheny** was renowned among rehabilitation professionals and families of the handicapped around the

country, and even the world.

But it was to the children who needed him, and to whom Mr. **Matheny** reached out, people say, with untiring generosity, that he may well have meant the most. When people around here talk about Mr. **Matheny**, their different descriptions are surprisingly similar: one after another, they say he was "a very, very special person," someone "you could count on," who "was always there." One man, a merchant in Gladstone, said he was "sort of a family man with anybody."

Born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Mr. **Matheny** attended a local high school and went on to Hibbing Junior College in Hibbing, Minnesota, where he earned an award for scholarship, character and

leadership.

He won a scholarship to go on to the University of Arizona, from which he graduated in 1935. A year later he married Mary Marguerite Hughes of Hibbing, and set out on a teaching career in corrective physical education. While he taught, he did graduate work in physical education at the University of Iowa.

Son Handicapped

In 1941, the **Mathenys'** son, Chuck, was born with cerebral palsy, and the couple's interest in handicapped children grew stronger. During World War II, Mr. **Matheny** worked as a civilian consultant in the physical training program of the Air Force, rehabilitating servicemen at camps in Georgia



1911 - 1977

"Mr. Matheny was renowned among rehabilitation professionals and families of the handicapped across the country, and even the world."

Remembered As Very Special Person

and Massachusetts, and later in a convalescent hospital on Cape Cod.

The **Mathenys'** exposure to Chuck's physical handicaps made the couple realize that facilities hardly existed for children similarly troubled. After the war, in 1946, they used a \$3,000 G.I. loan to start a combined school and summer camp for cerebral palsied children in Burnt Mills.

When the **Mathenys** founded the school, cerebral palsy treatment was a new field, and there was no one to discourage dedicated newcomers. At every opportunity, the couple made contact with doctors working in the field, and formed close associations with such leading professionals as Dr. Winthrop

Phelps, founder of the Kennedy Center for Handicapped Children at Johns Hopkins Hospital; Dr. Burton Chance of Children's Hospital in Philadelphia, and Dr. Howard Rusk of New York's Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine. The doctors began to refer children regularly to the **Matheny** school.

The school grew, formed its first board of trustees, and moved in 1954 to a permanent home on a hilltop in Peapack. With support from foundations and individual contributors, the **Mathenys** developed an entirely new concept in school-hospital treatment, accepting any child who could benefit from their school's services and attempting to help the whole family, not just the handicapped child.

The school, now with an enrollment of 82 children and a staff of 105, has become known around the country and the world as one of the finest facilities of its kind. Mr. **Matheny** was its director until three years ago, when poor health forced him to retire, having built the rarest kind of private institution: one that has never turned away anyone because of inability to pay.

Many He Helped

The area around Peapack-Gladstone is filled with people who can tell stories of something Mr. **Matheny** did when they needed help. One such person is Rita Card, of Peapack, president of the local first aid squad. When Mrs. Card's husband suffered a severe stroke, she said, "there's no way I could have

gotten through without Walt.

"To me he was the most wonderful man. Ben and I are just two of the many people that he's helped throughout the town. He's done so much that people don't even know about, helping loads and loads of people.

"It was just that kind of thing, that if you had a problem, be it a small problem or what, you knew you could always count on the **Mathenys.**"

"He was a very, very (Continued on Page 22)

NOTICE

The second For Hills Borough sponsored trash pickup of 1977 will be held Monday, June 20. Please remove containers promptly after pickup. Mary Bowler, Clerk 6/16/77

Marguerite and Walter In Every Sense a Team

“We happened to be two people in the right place at the right time. There was nothing at the time for anyone but children with polio. We learned and we listened, and we surrounded ourselves with intelligent people, and it was easy.”

Mary Marguerite Matheny, founded Matheny School

PEAPACK-GLADSTONE — Mary Marguerite Matheny, 75, died yesterday (May 6, 1988) at Morristown Memorial Hospital.

She was born in Hibbing, Minn., and lived in Far Hills and Burnt Mills before moving to Peapack in 1950.

Mrs. Matheny was a co-founder and associate director with her late husband, Walter D. Matheny, of the Matheny School for Cerebral Palsy Children in Peapack.

The school was founded in 1946, as a combined school and summer camp for cerebral palsy children in Burnt Mills. As the school grew and formed

its first board of trustees, it moved to its permanent home in Peapack in 1954.

Mrs. Matheny was a member of Basking Ridge Presbyterian Church. Her husband died in 1977.

Surviving are a son, Charles H. Matheny of Peapack; a daughter, Mary Ann Bents of Westlake, Ohio; a brother, Charles E. Hughes Jr. of Kettering, Ohio; a sister, Myrl Jean Hughes of Bedminster; and two grandchildren.

Arrangements are by Layton Funeral Home in Bedminster.



Courier-News, May 7, 1988



Chuck at Work and Play

Chuck Matheny had a zest for life, a keen sense of humor, a love of music, and enduring friendships.

Quite independent, he mowed the lawns at Matheny, plowed the snow, collected the trash, and stocked the soda machines.



Was it Cinco de Mayo?

His two-seater go-cart





Charles Hughes Matheny (1941 – 2017)

Chuck Matheny died at his home on the Matheny campus on December 14, 2017.

As the former Matheny president and CEO, Dr. Kendell R. Sprott, wrote:

“Chuck was educated here; grew into adulthood, held a job, and made good friends here; served as a role model and mentor for our students and patients; and lived out his life here until his death at age 76. He demonstrated to others at Matheny how to live a fulfilling and full life, how to be joyful and how to share joy with others, and how to be an integral part of a community while living with developmental disabilities.”

In a true sense, Chuck, with his ever-present smile, became “the face” of Matheny.

TO MARGUERITE AND WALT MATHENY

THE MATHENY SCHOOL... WHAT BEAUTIFUL WORDS
THOSE ARE FOR THE HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE
ACROSS THE LAND... ACROSS THE WORLD...
WHO HAVE COME HERE LOOKING FOR HELP
AND WHO, THANKS TO YOU, HAVE LEFT HERE
WITH HOPE AND COURAGE RESTORED, ABLE
AGAIN TO FIGHT THEIR UNEQUAL BATTLES.

IN A WORLD WHERE FEW ACHIEVE GREATNESS,
YOU ARE GREAT. IN SPITE OF TOWERING
OBSTACLES, YOU HAVE MADE AN IMPOSSIBLE
DREAM COME TRUE. ALONG, WITH THE
HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN AND PARENTS TO
WHOM YOU HAVE BROUGHT HOPE AND JOY
WE SALUTE YOU WITH LOVE, RESPECT AND
ADMIRATION, AND THANK YOU FOR THE
GREAT PRIVILEGE OF HAVING SHARED, IN A
SMALL WAY, IN YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS.

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



To the memories and legacies of Walter, Marguerite, and Chuck Matheny, and with sincere thanks to the staff and volunteers of the Matheny Medical and Educational Center, and Mary Ann Matheny Bents, for their assistance and support in the making of this presentation.

And, most importantly, with best wishes to all of the past and present residents, clients, and students of Matheny.

W. Barry Thomson
March 2026